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ABSTRACT

Intended as a reference for training and consulting in the field of business communication, this book presents research, implements theory, and explores communication practices vital to all organizations. The titles of the essays and their authors are as follows: (1) "Communication Consulting--The State of the Art" (William J. Buchholz); (2) "The Next Decade: An Explosion of Communication Consulting" (William J. Buchholz); (3) "Improved Communication: Improved Productivity" (John Hollwitz and Eric Matthiesen); (4) "In-House Training in Business Communication: A Status Report" (L. W. Denton); (5) "Role Functions and Role Conflicts of Communication Trainers" (Linda L. Putnam); (6) "Nontraining Consulting: Get Your Feet Wet" (Frederick W. Harbaugh); (7) "Writing for Profit: A Catalog of Hints" (Carol M. Barnum); (8) "How to Enter the Field of Specialized Writing for Nursing" (Cathy M. Ceccio and Joseph F. Ceccio); (9) "Consulting Opportunities for Speech Communication Faculty" (R. Wayne Pace); (10) "Obtaining, Negotiating, and Pricing Your First Consulting Job" (Peter B. Clarke); (11) "Interviewing and Auditing Procedures for In-House Communication Seminars" (William J. Buchholz); (12) "Writing Effectiveness: A Survey of Attitudes, Needs, and Desires" (William J. Buchholz); (13) "Assessing Attitudes about Organizational Communications" (William J. Rothwell); (14) "A Questionnaire to Determine Barriers to Effective Communication" (Steven Golen and Thomas Inman); (15) "Business Report Writing Competencies" (Thomas Inman and Steven Golen); (16) "The Job Incumbent Survey: An Approach to Identifying Communication Training Needs" (John Hatfield and Richard Huseman); (17) "Dissolving the Granite Complex" (William J. Buchholz); (18) "Training Public Administrators to Communicate: A Policy/Behavior Approach" (Hindy Lauer Schachter); (19) "Helping Engineers Prepare Training Material for Nontechnical Audiences" (Jessie Gunn Stephens); (20) "Ethical and Political Issues in Communication Consulting" (Larry Smeltzer); (21)

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Foreword

This book has been needed for a long time—since 1935, at least, when ABCA was founded.

Ever since that time requests have poured into ABCA Headquarters for information about training and consulting. Many times we could not give satisfactory answers because we were not experts in every aspect of training and consulting. Companies would phone or write and ask how to set up a writing-training program for their employees—or they would want us to recommend a consultant—or at least tell them how to find a consultant. Sometimes we had a *Bulletin* or *Journal* article we could send them. Sometimes we could offer advice out of our own experience. But now we have a collection of information and advice from many sources, all of them authoritative.

Many professors and other teachers wanted to know how to get into what seemed to them to be the lucrative business of business writing consulting. Some had little in the way of qualifications beyond the desire to make money. Others seriously wanted to expand their horizons and add training and consulting to their college classroom work so that they could become more complete teachers. Those we wanted to help and did so to the extent of our capacity, which was not very great. Now we have a book that will orient them to the activities of training and consulting.

It is essential for teachers of business communication to get out into the trenches where the war of words is fought. This book provides a preview of what it is like out there, and its readers are thus enabled to solve the problems they will find.

Occasionally, outsiders (people not actively engaged in any form of business communication) inquire about changing from whatever they are doing into some area of business communication. Some have good business backgrounds; others, no background at all—for example, the person who billed herself as a “sewing consultant” and wanted to change careers and “persue” one in business communications. This book will not solve problems for people like that, well intentioned as they are, although it may convince them that there is a lot to learn if they really want to get into the field.

This book will be the standard reference on training and consulting in business communication from now until the revised second edition comes out. I cannot imagine that we will ever let it go out of print. There is every reason to believe that the need for

this book will increase, if not for the next 50 years, at least for the foreseeable future.

Professor Buchholz deserves the thanks and commendations of all of us in the business communication field for collecting and editing the articles in this book.

**Francis W. Weeks, Executive Director
American Business Communication Association**

Preface

As is common with so many books, the idea for *Communication Training and Consulting in Business, Industry, and Government* was born out of despair. About six years ago, I was frantically scurrying around for information—any information—that would help me put together my first communication proposal for industry. I spent countless hours in libraries reading everything available on in-house writing programs, technical editing techniques, and communications auditing. Telephone calls around the country, letters to colleagues, buttonholing in hallways, and finally some tortuous brainstorming produced a successful writing/editing program. Encouraged by that success, I began my own modest consulting practice.

But the unspeakable frustration, the futility of having spent so much time on leads that went nowhere, was nearly overwhelming. I was lucky to know a good number of men and women who had spent years in communication consulting, yet my own attempt to break into the field almost failed because of wasted time and expense. For years I had heard that business communication consulting was a burgeoning industry, limitless in scope and vitally necessary. The need was clear. Opportunity was there. The problem was how to tap into it.

After my own hard times had mercifully ended, I decided that no one should ever go through that again. Accordingly, I presented a number of sessions on consulting at national conferences of the American Business Communication Association and the Conference on College Composition and Communication. Two articles followed, both published in the *American Business Communication Association Bulletin*. Meanwhile, I noticed that seminars on consulting were proliferating at regional and national meetings of the ABCA, the Four C's and the Modern Language Association. Clearly, thousands of people still felt a need that was not being met very effectively. The solution was simple enough: a single book that would gather helpful information for the specialist who desired the intellectual challenge of consulting in written and oral communication.

People who go into consulting acknowledge it as an activity that enhances professionalism and bestows a certain prestige. Indeed, most colleges and universities recognize consulting as a significant professional activity in promotion and tenure decisions. This book is meant to help academics explore the possibility of consulting as

an avenue toward increased professionalism. In addition, this book is intended for veteran consultants, independent or corporate-based, who wish to broaden their professional scope, who seek new delivery techniques and communication practices. Finally, *CTCBIG* could serve as supplementary reading in a communication course for majors, undergraduate or graduate, because it presents research, implements theory, and explores communication practices vital to all organizations.

Because communication consulting comprises so many different kinds of activities, one person could not possibly experience them all. Hence, *CTCBIG* has 26 contributors. A glance at their names reveals a veritable *Who's Who* of communication consultants. The contributors have published widely and have consulted and trained with numerous organizations. Ranging geographically over the entire country, they possess countless years of both academic and practical experience in communication consulting.

A single volume of a few hundred pages cannot hope to cover all the areas of concern. With that in mind, I have designed this book to offer some of the most urgent essentials. Sections 1 and 2, for example, basically define communications consulting and present its scope. The theme of both sections is that communications consulting is on the rise and will be vital in the next decade. The productivity of an essentially service economy is linked directly to the efficiency of communication, and the communication consultant has a critical role to play in assuring a lively economy.

Section 3 offers ideas on the opportunities available in a communication consulting practice, including suggestions on what to keep in mind while starting a business. Section 4 presents survey instruments and discusses the various auditing techniques most readily available to a beginning consultant. Section 5 touches upon barriers, from the client's writing anxiety to the consultant's ethical dilemmas. Section 6 sets forth various successful program deliveries. Because space is limited, and this volume has had to be quite selective, the annotated bibliography offers a list of publications useful to any practitioner. Indeed, many articles throughout this collection contain bibliographical entries that the reader will find indispensable.

In editing this book I have had the encouragement of colleagues throughout the country. To name them all is not possible. Since all are members of the American Business Communication Association, let me thank them by acknowledging the support I have

received from the ABCA. In particular, thanks go to George H. Douglas, ABCA Special Publications Editor, who has been a constant source of help, from the time I first proposed this project. Thanks also to Francis Weeks, Executive Director of the ABCA, and to Robert Gieselman of the University of Illinois, both of whom offered much helpful advice. Paul Deane, Professor of English, Bentley College, has been extraordinarily generous, giving much of his time to reading portions of the manuscript. And of course, as editor, I must thank each of the contributors, without whom there would be no book.

William Buchholz
Bentley College

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Communication Consulting: The Present and Beyond

Whether in business, industry, or government, the most sacred trust of management is to ensure the life and growth of the group being managed. Whatever threatens the group is ultimately leveled pointblank at the head of every one of its members—and poor communication is often the greatest single threat within any organization. Organizations, to change the metaphor somewhat, are held together by rather delicate lines or threads of communication. When these are cut, or when they become hopelessly entangled, the organization itself may well languish. Poor attitudes, misunderstandings, incomprehension, misrepresentation, imprecision, defensiveness, and whatever else human beings manage to consciously set against one another, weaken the delicate web of continuity that gives the organization its strength. In the end, self-preservation dictates that these communication threads be freed of the weights that may cause them to snap.

The communication specialist is the one person most qualified to relieve these pressures of miscommunication. As a consultant, the communication expert is entrusted with the responsibility to see that an organization continues to function; more than that, the communication consultant seeks better, more imaginative, ways for people in organizations to connect with each other. This image of connections illustrates the essence of the consultant's mission in the workplace. Whatever comes between people, the consultant seeks to destroy, whether the obstacle is lack of skill, shortsightedness, or outright intransigence. The communication consultant sees language, spoken or written, as a vessel that must be carefully passed and carefully received, for language is a medium of exchange that can unite people and, when used wisely, can promote their welfare and happiness. Ill-used, however, language can be a poison that shrivels the best intention and clouds the highest resolve.

This book springs from the philosophy that communication consulting is something much more than simply a way to make money or to increase professional expertise. Communication consulting, philosophically considered, is a guardianship that protects people by acquainting them with the power of language both to create and to destroy. The informing spirit of this book is the recognition that communication is power; the consultant's chief responsibility is to see that this power is not misused. This lofty aim is being threatened, however, because communication consulting is fast becoming big business. There is a very real danger that as the monetary and professional rewards of consulting increase and become obvious to more people, the quality of service (professionalism itself) will diminish. Anyone who can afford a business card can become a communication consultant—and that is precisely the problem facing the profession at the moment. What this book does, then, is to confront that problem, to offer a safeguard against professional dilution by clarifying the purpose, scope, and functions of communication consulting.

Throughout this book communication consulting activities have been delimited basically in two ways: as free-lancing and as corrective implementation. Free-lancing offers many opportunities for professionals who want to write. By definition, free-lancing does not perform audits of communication efficiency, nor does it train clients. On the other hand, corrective implementation is broader in scope; it both audits and trains the client and, depending upon the practitioner, may comprise writing, speaking, listening, reading, and nonverbal signals—in short, the whole range of communication.

Those who undertake corrective implementation may do so while permanently employed by a company as trainers or consultants; these people are termed "internal consultants." Their counterparts are the "external consultants," outside professionals who contract with an organization for a limited time and for a specified end. While the terms "consultant" and "trainer" are used interchangeably by many practitioners, consultants need not necessarily be trainers (they may function solely as advisors or auditors who subcontract implementation activities). Trainers, however, must perform all four of the specific functions of consulting if they are to design and implement corrective activities successfully.

Corrective implementation consists of these four basic steps: (1) fact finding, (2) analysis, (3) proposal submission, and (4) implementation. Steps one and two are termed the "audit phase"; step three presents the audit results and recommends corrective actions; step four is the implementation of the correction. While this entire book is concerned with the problems attendant in all four steps, readers may find step four to be the most challenging, for here the professional delivers the activity that seeks to change attitudes, procedures, and skills within the client organization. Implementing the recommendations of the audit gives the consultant the power to change behavior and thereby the power to upset organizations—to upset them, however, for the better. The communication trainer, whether an internal or external consultant, is under a great deal of pressure to succeed in this phase of consulting, for clients have high expectations and allow very little room for failure.

Exactly what tasks do communication consultants perform? What kinds of personality characteristics do consultants have? What opportunities are available in communication consulting? These three important questions are answered in "Communication Consulting—the State of the Art." One of the most significant points in this article is that good consultants are overwhelmingly curious; they have the desire to dig and explore, to analyze; above all else, consultants enjoy discovering the dynamics of, and solutions to, communication problems.

For communication consulting the decade ahead looks very promising. A number of indicators suggest that people will remain hospitable to the idea that effective communication is vital to the health of any organization. "The Next Decade: An Explosion of Communications Consulting" points out that expert communicators will be in high demand. As the work place becomes more automated and democratized, people increasingly will recognize

the need to communicate competently. More and more, managers will become information specialists whose principal task will be to move information effectively and efficiently. The need for seasoned communication trainers and consultants therefore will not slacken. In fact, given the current deplorable state of communication skills and the likelihood that these skills will continue to deteriorate, the future for gifted people who can supply communication skills looks bright indeed.

Both articles in this section stress the need for accountability and responsibility in consulting. Increasingly, consultants will have to design and implement masterful solutions to difficult communication problems. Successful consulting will result only if the consultant is well trained in communication principles and organizational behavior; furthermore, the consultant will have to realize that consulting is an art as much as a science. The best consultants are not only analytical and methodical; they are creative as well. In a very real sense, good communication consulting is an adventure that results in improved communication and enriched human relationships.

Communication Consulting – The State of the Art

William J. Buchholz, *Bentley College*

The word "consultant" is almost magic. To some, it conjures up wonderful visions of three-piece-suit sorcerers, gliding through realms glimpsed only in dreams. The consultant is semidivine, an inspired seer who can penetrate into the heart of any matter. To others, consultants are less like demigods and more like lingering threats, continual reminders of the client's incompetence and vulnerability. Calling in a consultant, you see, is admitting defeat: people who enlist consultants are simply exposing their flanks, readying themselves for the fatal plunge and twist of the consultant's knife.

Whether viewed as a blessing or a curse, the consultant's magic will undoubtedly change things; people may lose jobs, power, influence, position, money. Whole departments might disappear. Inevitably, safe and comfortable ways of doing things will be upset. Ignorance will be exposed. Even relationships may be smashed. People will be probed, picked at, observed, analyzed, and chided. Their shortcomings and errors will be logged and charted. In short, the hallowed ways of doing things will be altered; and people will be sent to training sessions that will bend them to the new ways.

Finally, though, if all goes well, the consultant will disappear. As a matter of fact, it is precisely this ability to disappear that gauges the consultant's success. Once problems have been diagnosed and cures administered, the consultant must be able to leave the organization alone. Anything less suggests failure in some aspect of analysis or delivery. Simply put, the consultant must blend into the organization, and in the end, quietly (almost magically) disappear.

THE CONSULTANT'S ROLE

What gives a consultant the power to disappear? Above all, one thing: the right attitude. At bottom, truly professional consultants purposely strive to make themselves expendable. The consultant's

ultimate goal is simply this: to reshape client behavior so that the organization carries on by itself, without the "consultant crutch." But, of course, the client's independence cannot be won alone by the consultant's attitude, correct or not. The desired client autonomy can be achieved only if proper self-directed attitudes and behavior within the organization are nurtured through the process of competent consulting.

Competent consulting has been defined as "an organized effort by specially trained and experienced persons to help management solve problems and improve operations, through the application of objective judgment based on specialized knowledge and skill and systematic analysis of facts."¹ Well trained and experienced consultants are duty bound to "improve" whatever they judge needs improving in the client organization. Their solutions must be faithful to the truth; consultants must carefully winnow facts without being influenced by desire for personal gain, without kowtowing to political expedience, and without perpetuating the need for service. Consultants must reject favor seekers, those who would use them to support pet projects and ideas. Finally, because each organization has its own distinct character and needs, consultants must offer solutions tailored to a client's unique requirements.

No one wants to look like a fool. But in consulting it is very easy to make rash judgments or to offer silly advice. Because they are outsiders, consultants have to be especially sensitive to their limits within the organization. External consultants, for instance, are usually employed by a client for a short term. While on board, the consultant becomes a part of the organization, but never a permanent part. This impermanency can make the consultant's job very difficult. Jerome Fuchs has put it well: "the consultant is basically an advisor and, as such, he does not exercise authoritative control over the corporate environment. He is subject to many variables in the equation—corporate policy, attitudes of inside people, established procedures, entrenched work habits, degree of management acceptance of outside assistance, and the extent to which the complexities of a problem render the problem solvable."² Recognition of these variables (the Achilles' heel of consulting) drives home the need for the consultant to be resilient and resourceful. Technical skill is not enough; the consultant must also have the right temperament and personal characteristics to be successful.

THE CONSULTANT'S CHARACTERISTICS

Can just anybody be a consultant? Probably not. Consulting makes demands that could be too stressful for some people. Before you decide to become a consultant, consider the consultant's role for just a moment. Consultants are hired to solve problems; they are *expected* to solve them. While new problems and new organizations can be exciting to deal with, they can also breed anxiety, the fear that this client's problems will defy solution. And, after all, who wants to admit defeat? Every single job is a challenge that demands new perspectives and creativity—and consultants are only as good as their next success. They have to make good on what they propose; whatever is recommended has to be an improvement. Furthermore, consultants are vulnerable: at any moment they may expose their ignorance; in analysis and fact finding, they may miss a crucial point that will cast the whole solution into doubt. Consultants are strangers whose job it is, in a very short time, to learn the goals, policies, procedures, and history of an organization. Though the client may see consultants as teachers, consultants inevitably see themselves as students—students who must be prepared always for a relentless series of examinations. And consultants sometimes must deal with people who dislike them, who fear them, who have little respect for their role as “know-it-all.” Floating in and out of various organizations allows little, if any, time for the sustained human relationships that make work so pleasant for most people.

If you have never undertaken consulting work, but feel you might enjoy the excitement and challenge, you must first reflect on your personality and work habits, assess your own character to see if you might be a successful consultant. P. W. Shay has listed a number of characteristics that some consulting firms have found important for successful management consultants; among these are stable behavior, self-confidence, drive, integrity, self-reliance, good judgment, analytical/problem solving ability, imagination and maturity.³ Beyond these rather general characteristics, Hubert Bermont adds that the consultant must be a listener;⁴ after all, as an advisor, the consultant assumes the role of healer, and healing cannot come about unless proper diagnosis is made. One of the most important diagnostic tools for any consultant is the ability to perceive. Hearing the patient's complaint is the first step.

Closely related to hearing is the ability to question; the consultant must be curious, for a great deal of poking about has to be

done, and a great deal of misspent time can be saved if the consultant knows what questions and which people to ask. Pervading all this activity, of course, is a spirit of adventurousness, a desire to explore and to take risks.⁵ Timidity, above all else, is the bane of the consultant. In consulting, to see yourself as a subordinate ultimately impugns your integrity, for you may well be afraid to suggest an unpopular solution. As Bermont cautions, "Never forget that, at the very least, you are in a peer situation. If you can't shake the old attitude that a person in a high position (usually the one who is considering retaining your services) is your superior, you are in trouble."⁶

Oftentimes, then, the success of the client/consultant relationship rests upon personalities. Many of these relationships wither because the client dislikes the consultant. Clients usually seek consultants with whom they feel comfortable. Personalities may be judged initially by appearance, by carriage. And the consultants who fit their consulting persona to the client's personality usually land more contracts. If, while maintaining your integrity, you can adapt to different personalities, you will be well on your way to making yourself acceptable to a number of different client types.

Realizing that "the major problem facing the consultant is to analyze the client's style so that the consultant can respond with congruent behavior," Marchione and English have constructed a table of personality types, useful as a rough guide to establish successful relationships between clients and consultants.⁷ They list eight types of client characteristics and the complementary behavior for consultants. For example, the Alpha I client is "oriented towards: tasks, results, the present; relies on intuition [and is] impatient." The suggested behavior for consultants is to be pragmatic, straightforward, and businesslike. For the problem-solving client type (Alpha II), the consultant would want to emphasize his or her own professional analytical abilities.⁸

The authors caution that their model is not a panacea, nor does it guarantee success, simply because success in consulting depends upon such a complicated mix of personalities and contexts. Their model, however, does alert the consultant to the importance of very carefully assessing the client's personality and applying that knowledge as an entering wedge in the relationship. It is important to "be aware of how you come across" and to "know as much about the contact person as possible."⁹ You must also keep in mind that the personality of this contact person may in some way be affecting, or even causing, the problem you are being invited to

solve. For example, as a consultant you may learn that part of a problem in the organization's internal communication network can be directly attributed to low morale and not to any particular delivery incompetencies. The morale is low, you may find, precisely because of the behavior of the contact person. If from the very beginning of your consulting you had been aware of the distinct personality traits of this person, you would have been able to use that information immediately in judging the entire climate of the organization. Of course, that kind of sensitivity to personality is an invaluable tool in every phase of assessing all the personalities that impinge on the problem area.

The best consultants are in fact gifted; they have an awareness, an insight, that allows them to penetrate people as well as facts. Empirical methodologies aside, consulting is not a science. Consulting is an art, primarily because it forces the practitioner "to cope with unknown conditions and unfamiliar personalities while obtaining the desired results. A professional must be able to adapt to a client's unique situation without compromising his own principles or integrity."¹⁰ Adaptability is many times the key to success in consulting.

The consultant is, in the best sense, a role-player or actor, who draws out a different mind set, or at least a different talent, for each role. According to Ronald and Gordon Lippitt many roles function in almost any consulting activity.¹¹ The consultant, for example, is a fact-finder; in this phase of consulting, the practitioner must gather, analyze, and synthesize empirical data. (I might add that personalities, as well as facts, are assessed.) In addition, the consultant is a technical specialist, whose particular skill has been proven in the work world. The consultant is a problem-solving collaborator who, with the client, articulates and clarifies the problem and pushes it toward solution. Solutions often being slippery, the consultant grasps alternatives as firmly as possible. When the consultant believes the best solution has been secured, the client must then be persuaded to take action. At this point the consultant becomes an advocate.

In all of this, of course, the consultant has been reflective, someone who continually has asked questions (perhaps almost Socratically) to help the client clarify the situation. This questioning helps the consultant and the client probe the work processes that may be aggravating the problem. Finally, the consultant is a trainer/educator who must help implement recommendations correctly, probably through extensive training of personnel. This

vast array of required skills makes the consultant a scientist, technician, teacher, philosopher, logician, priest, psychologist, industrial engineer, physician, lawyer, detective, and judge. An impressive list. It is easy to see why many clients still regard consultants as magicians.

THE COMMUNICATION CONSULTANT

Virtually every phase of an organization's operation is somehow affected by communication. And communication involves writing, speaking, listening, reading, winking the eye, moving the hand, and leaving the room. Because communication is such a nebulous term (after all, even withdrawal into a brick-wall reverie communicates a definite statement), communication consulting can take just about any form possible. The full range of communication consulting potential is indicated by the great number of areas touched by communication. In Jerome Fuchs' "Principal Areas of Competence in Management Consulting," some of the most conspicuous areas for communication consulting include management reports, public relations, management development (especially writing, speaking, and listening skills), training programs for nonmanagement personnel, and communicating with employees. For communicating with clients and customers, the consultant might focus on consumer marketing, direct marketing and mailing, industrial marketing, merchandising, advertising and sales promotion. Other areas include credit and collection, research and development reports, office management, forms design, records management and information retrieval.¹² This list, long as it is, still is not all-inclusive. As a rule, however, communication consultants carefully assess their skills in these areas and then define themselves as generalists or specialists.

The generalists have a great deal of training and experience in the broad run of organizational management and communication. They are prepared, for instance, to perform general communication audits for an organization. Any general communication audit is designed to sift through a breathtaking number of variables. Greenbaum and White have divided these variables into four major networks: (1) the Regulative Network: such areas as policy statements, superior-subordinate interaction, and so forth; (2) the Innovative Network: problem-solving meetings and suggestions for change; (3) the Integrative Network: staff meetings, rewards,

recognitions, and the like; (4) the Informative-Instructive Network: "company publications, bulletin boards, training activities, and the grapevine."¹³ The International Communication Association (ICA) has developed an audit instrument to identify an organization's strengths and weaknesses in these networks. The results of the full audit are stored in a central data bank, available to researchers. The audited organization receives a final report that indicates "which attitudes, behaviors, practices, and skills should be continued, added, changed, or eliminated."¹⁴ The ICA trains and accredits its auditors but does not perform the corrective functions. Many times, however, the ICA does refer the organization to consultants who can correct communication problems within specified areas of expertise.

Most consultants across the country are specialists, who work independently of the ICA. If they are good at teaching writing, they focus on letters, memos, and reports. They may concentrate on a certain type of business (financial institutions, insurance companies, retailers, high technology) and perhaps even a certain type of communication within that business (marketing communication, user manuals, computer documentation, technical reports for popular consumption). If speech and interpersonal communication are their strong suits, consultants may run effective speaking seminars, group dynamics sessions, or interpersonal communication workshops. There are those whose expertise lies in graphics production, audio-visual techniques, printing and reproduction. The list is almost endless.

Basically, though, communication consulting has two deliveries: (1) free-lance production and (2) corrective implementation. Free-lancing includes activities such as report editing, copywriting, project troubleshooting, brochure/booklet designing and general research writing, to name a few. The distinctive characteristics of free-lancing are that the free-lancer is paid for the work and that the work is more or less self-contained, or of a piece. The free-lancer may be solicited for a project or may volunteer completed work for acceptance. If solicited, the free-lancer is usually retained only for the duration of the one specific project (of course, the free-lancer may be called upon in the future, as needed). Free-lancers lose the free-lance status at the point where their services are retained exclusively by one organization for an extended time.

The communication consultant who engages in corrective implementation follows basically four steps: fact finding, fact

analysis, proposal submission, and implementation.¹⁵ These consultants are usually sought out to correct a perceived communication problem within the organization. Such problems may include anything from poor writing to poor speaking and listening, or a combination of these. Perhaps the client perceives a problem in documentation of activities, in customer relations, in report structures, in letter writing, in interpersonal communications. The consultant's job is to come on board, carefully analyze the perceived problem, ascertain whether that is indeed the problem, and recommend the solution. More often than not, the consultant also carries out the solution by means of a training program. If the consultant determines that a problem is present outside his or her area of expertise, an appropriate expert is recommended to the client. The training program may be a few hours long, may extend over a period of days, or may be offered over a span of weeks or months. The consultant usually follows up after a time, to make sure that corrective suggestions have indeed taken.

In the course of this whole process, as Robert Hays points out, "Both client and consultant must ensure: (1) proper time and cost-accounting, (2) setting of clear objectives, (3) agreement on criteria for performance and evaluation, and (4) delivery of service likely to be worth the investment."¹⁶ The true test of success for the corrective implementor is that upon completion of the training program, the organization has changed for the better and is capable of operating without extensive help from the consultant.

Given the wealth of possibilities in communication consulting (whether as a free-lancer or as a corrective implementor), talented and well prepared individuals would be wise to consider starting a practice. The next concern is to examine opportunities in communication consulting. The best way to approach this task is to peer into the future, for the next decade holds the answer. While it is always dangerous to attempt to penetrate fog-enshrouded tomorrows, some fairly reliable signs indicate where the future may lead. The next article waves away some of the mist and offers a few tentative conclusions about the short-term future of communication consulting.

NOTES

1. This is the Association of Consulting Management Engineers (ACME) definition, from Alfred Hunt, *The Management Consultant* (New York: Ronald Press, 1977), p. 20.
2. Jerome Fuchs, *Management Consultants in Action* (New York: Hawthorne, 1975), pp. 9-10.
3. P. W. Shay, *The Common Body of Knowledge for Management Consultants* (New York: The Association of Consulting Management Engineers, 1974), pp. 41-42.
4. Hubert Bermont, *How to Become a Successful Consultant in Your Own Field* (Washington: Bermont Books, 1978), p. 15.
5. Bermont, p. 16.
6. Bermont, p. 19.
7. Anthony Marchione and Jon English, "Improving Your Odds in Consulting," in *The Academic Consultant Connection*, edited by George Gore and Robert Wright (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt, 1979), p. 28.
8. Marchione and English, p. 29.
9. Marchione and English, p. 34.
10. Jerome Fuchs, *Making the Most of Management Consulting Services* (New York: AMACOM, 1975), p. 11.
11. Ronald Lippitt and Gordon Lippitt, "Consulting Process in Action," *Training and Development Journal*, 29 (May and June 1975).
12. Jerome Fuchs, *Making the Most of Management Consulting Services*, pp. 143-146.
13. Howard Greenbaum and Noel White, "Biofeedback at the Organization Level: The Communication Audit," *The Journal of Business Communication*, 13 (Summer 1976), 6.
14. Gerald Goldhaber and Paul Krivonos, "The ICA Communication Audit: Process, Status, Critique," *The Journal of Business Communication*, 15 (Fall 1977), 46.
15. Milan Kubr, editor, *Management Consulting: A Guide to the Profession* (Geneva: International Labor Office, 1976), p. 119.
16. Robert Hays, "Communications Consulting—Both Sides," *The ABCA Bulletin*, 42 (December 1979), 18.

The Next Decade: An Explosion of Communications Consulting

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The big question for communication consultants in the next decade is this: will there be anyone around who needs them? If the U.S. Department of Labor occupation projections prove correct, white collar positions will abound; and great numbers of the new workers who fill these positions will need the consultant's advice and training. These white collar positions will grow vigorously for a number of reasons. One is that as more smaller businesses are being overtaken by chains and conglomerates, "the demand for salaried managers will grow as firms increasingly rely on management specialists in highly technical areas of operation,"¹ such as accounting, finance, and marketing.

Further, much of the economic expansion of the next decade will come from other technical areas as well. The growth of the high-technology sector of the market (such as computers, genetic engineering, and electrical engineering) will assure a brisk demand for engineers, scientists, and technicians. On other fronts, the energy industry will expand, and to counter it, environmental groups will proliferate. Health, banking, and insurance organizations will flourish because the ever-aging babyboom generation will demand more health care; as they hit their full earnings and investment stride, these people will also require greater and more diversified financial services. Growth in these and other areas will trigger all kinds of communication needs, from internal corporate communications to advertising and public relations—not to mention the inevitable countergrowth of advocacy group and special interest communications. But two questions remain: (1) how many actual white collar positions will open up, and (2) what specific communication needs will these workers have?

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the next decade's active economy will result in a 24.9 percent overall increase in the growth of *new* white collar positions.² As impressive as this figure is, even more spectacular will be the number of jobs opening up because of replacements, "workers who die, retire, temporarily leave the labor force, or transfer to another occupation." These "replacement needs resulting from deaths and retirements alone

are expected to be more than double the number of openings resulting from increases in employment." By 1990 we will see, through growth and replacement, an estimated total of 36.8 million openings in white collar positions.³ What all this means, then, is that we are sitting on the edge of a smoking occupational volcano whose eruption will alter the business landscape beyond recognition.

These employment statistics suggest that more and more of tomorrow's workforce will be relatively well educated. Consequently, their expectations of what the workplace should offer will be high. They will expect to work in environments that are intellectually stimulating and diverse. Increasingly, job satisfaction for them will be defined less in terms of paycheck (though still important) and more in terms of fulfillment. They will demand that their fringe benefits include training programs to develop their full potential as human beings. Further, these workers will want a greater share of the say in how they manage their time and tasks. Most far-reaching of all the changes to come—one that will actually redesign the physical layout of the office as well as redefine worker functions—is office automation. With all these changes will come the communication revolution.

THE AUTOMATED OFFICE

Most experts agree that by 1990 the office will have undergone drastic technological, psychological, and managerial changes. People will have to be prepared psychologically for the new technology, and the new machines themselves will have to be made easier to use. Most important, however, machines and people will have to be integrated into effective systems. The office of 1990 will become something other than just a heap of glittering doodads. Its changing technology will result in more effective, efficient, and inexpensive uses of machines and people.

Information will be the raw material of the automated office. As always, managers will continue to marshall people, tasks, and equipment, but added to these activities will be the responsibility to superintend information movement. Creation, control, and communication of information, through people and machines, will become the ultimate management function. The office of tomorrow will be designed to serve people as they manipulate this information. The office will become, in effect, a communication center.

Already on the market are machines whose sole purpose is to increase the speed and capacity of information manipulation through the four major information forms: voice, text, data, and graphics. At the heart of the automated office is the computer, either as a central unit into which all peripherals feed, or as a self-contained microcomputer. Information systems design will dictate what components or stand-alone units will be most desirable for an office. Right now, it looks as though the technology will continue to advance along four basic lines: word processing, reprographics, micrographics, and telecommunication.⁴

Word processing equipment will become increasingly more sophisticated. Already companies are working to produce machines with greater capacities: higher definition of visual display for soft copy (the video product), choice of character fonts, left and right margin justification, extensive text editing capabilities, and high speed non-impact printers that produce hard copy (the paper product) silently, at a rate of hundreds of lines per minute. Information can be stored in these systems on cassettes, floppy disks, Winchester (hard) disks, magnetic cards, or magnetic tapes. Allied to the word processor advances are those in reproduction equipment (reprographics or computerized type-setting equipment). As it becomes increasingly important for management to disseminate information widely, both internally and externally, this equipment becomes more necessary. At present, machines (albeit very expensive machines) can literally produce text of a quality equal to that of printed books. Micrographics (microfilm, microfiche, etc.) can then be used to store this matter. Micrographics is coming into its own, too; as J. J. Connel points out, micrographics technology is "changing microfilm from an archival to an operating storage medium,"⁵ thereby introducing a whole new communications capability. Finally, the most inclusive technological advance, the one that so far seems to knit the rest together, is telecommunications.

Telecommunications is the outreach capability of the automated office. Already on the horizon is the electronic mail system, whereby a word processing unit in one office is linked to such units in other offices. Information can be sent without post office delays because no hard copies have to be physically relayed. Electrical bits of data fly through the air, to be received and reconverted into symbols that can be displayed on video, stored, retrieved and printed out at will on the other end. And, of course, information can be sent simultaneously to multiple terminals

Not only texts but also audio messages will be telecommunicated, in the form of audio mail. Teleconferencing over video- and non-video-telephone hookups will replace expensive business trips. Computers themselves will communicate with one another, as they are doing already, via telecommunication networks.

For those of us who consult and train in the automated office, the implications of all this technology are staggering. Connel notes that the office of the future will be a place "where management interacts with a company's information network,"⁶ and it will be a direct interaction. The manager's desk will no doubt have a terminal and display that will tie directly into a central computer. Access to information will be direct rather than mediated by secretaries and assistants. Calenders, files, tickler files, and logs will be available at the punch of a key.

Whereas the seventies and early eighties saw many clerical tasks automated, the remainder of the eighties will see more and more management functions computerized. Consultants will have to become familiar with the full capabilities of these computerized functions. The communication consultant's task will be to help managers become proficient in oral and interpersonal skills so these people can work more effectively with machine dictation and teleconferencing. Managers will also have to learn to work directly with word processing terminals. Thus, writing, organizational, and logical skills will have to be particularly sharp. Louis Mertes has the final word here: "the effective use of dictation, phone recorders, pagers and electronic mail requires the presentation of a clear, concise message when there is no opportunity for the recipient to ask questions immediately. Skills that will be increasingly needed will be those that existed prior to the era of the telephone, when most business communication was done by letter."⁷ Our trip into the future has landed us in the past.

Thus as we move into the eighties, we will witness more and more the death of paper. Electronic storage and retrieval systems will overtake their more cumbersome forebear, the file cabinet. Microfiche and microfilm will continue to save countless thousands of square feet of shelf space. Even more impressive will be the increasing capabilities of data manipulation through thumbnail-sized microchips (a single silicon chip can hold hundreds of pages of printed matter). Whole libraries will be safely tucked under the arm and carried home at night, or accessed from a home terminal. Whatever information is needed will be called up instantly on video displays, and if desired, hard copies will be produced in

minutes on silent highspeed printers. Electronic mail will link business to business in ever-increasingly efficient communication networks. These networks will soon spread out of the office and into the home, as workers will be able to perform many of their tasks on a terminal tied to the central office computers. The workplace itself will begin to de-centralize. How then will all these changes affect training in writing and speaking? The question is important to ask, for its answer has profound implications.

COMPUTERIZED WRITING

Humanists today argue that man will never overcome the need to be literate. Manipulation of language symbols through writing and speaking will always be necessary, they assert, if human beings are to remain the least bit civilized, and certainly if they are to achieve the higher levels of intellectual and cultural refinement. At present, this argument looks irrefutable. Yet, even now we can see that the technological advancements of the eighties will introduce some spectacular changes in the ways we manipulate these symbols. For instance, it is probably safe to predict that by the end of this decade voice transmission will become supreme in the process of written business communication. This is evident already in many offices where dictation is spoken into cassettes or telephones and then routed to word processor operators, who have taken the place of secretaries scribbling face-to-face dictation. Also, as word processors are improved to include speech recognition capability (sensitive to voice tones, they will by-pass typists altogether), we can see that correspondence will be talked into units that will produce an instant copy (hard or soft) perfectly typed (or displayed), without errors in spelling. Even now such machines are being developed. Soon they will also be capable of voice output—as many children's toys already are. Synthetic speech, by the way, sounds amazingly human, complete with tones, inflections, and modulations that can express humor, sincere concern, and encouragement.

Right now, of course, word processors allow the operator to compose on-screen via a terminal keyboard, eliminating dictation paraphernalia as well as paper. This electronic composition allows the user to edit texts instantly and easily: paragraphs can be deleted or added, various sentences or sentence elements can be moved about at will, phrases can be underlined, numbers put into

perfect columns, margins justified, typeface varied, charts set up, graphs drawn, and so forth. The advantage of immediate on-screen access, as opposed to voice composition, is that the composer can see what is being written and does not have to imagine what the printout will look like. Keyboard writers experience the delightfully playful aspects of editing as they get the feel of increased control over the manipulative phases of composition.

As written composition takes one of these two forms, either voice or keyboard transcription, communicators will become talkers or composers rather than "writers." This change in approach will profoundly affect the act of writing and the ways we teach people to write. More and more, attention will have to be paid to writing as process rather than product. Any communication training, therefore, will have to take the new technology into account. Writing seminars, for example, will concentrate on the word processor's keyboard editing and organizing capabilities. Seminars will also have to include dictation procedures, so people can be taught how to envision the finished product. They will have to become adept at creating mental pictures of words on a page because they will not have the luxury of witnessing their communication take form as they talk it into cassettes, speak over video-phones, or produce audio mail.

One of the advantages of oral composition, however, will be that properly trained people may produce pieces that sound more natural, more human, as they reflect spoken intonation. They will be perhaps less prone to speak long, convoluted sentences because such "writing" will immediately sound stilted, pompous, or unnatural to them. Of course, if the "writer" is given to such style in speaking, there is little the new technology can do by itself to improve the writing quality. However, trainers will have a marvelous opportunity to show people how they can harness their best speaking abilities to improve their writing. In effect, then, writers will often not write their communications at all: they will instead speak them onto the page. In the process, people will liberate their minds from the grip of paper. The stylistic improvements that oral composition will yield may well carry over to keyboard composition.

As machines are programmed to perform more of the corrective functions in mechanics, especially spelling (and ultimately perhaps even grammar and punctuation), people will most likely be able to detach themselves more easily from their overly critical attitudes in the creative phase of composition. Indeed, what voice and

keyboard transcription will be able to do is emancipate the composer. The human brain will be freed from its bondage to the mechanical aspects of symbolizing; it will be able to range more broadly and deeply in the creative aspects of expression. For many people, the process of writing, therefore, will become more friendly, less intimidating. They will be encouraged to experiment more. After all, error will become less of a psychological barrier: no wasted paper, no retyping countless drafts, no futile anxiety over minor mechanical matters. Instead: the possibility of the mind unleashing itself as effectively as it does in inspired speech or reverie, instants that can be captured almost immediately at conception rather than minutes later through the cumbersome mechanical means of pen on paper, where so much that is excellent evaporates in the slow scratching of character after character onto a piece of paper.

Effective writing and speaking seminars in the late eighties and early nineties will be able to concentrate less on mechanics and more on the conceptual and psychological challenges of communication. Of course, many people who have difficulty with mechanics may desire training in this area; it is very likely, however, that CAI (Computer Aided Instruction) programs will be available for them. With CAI, individuals would work privately at their own pace, using specially designed software that allows dynamic interaction with the computer; no human instructor would be present. In the eighties and nineties instructors will be used increasingly for more challenging information management assignments as communication training programs evolve toward more sophisticated models that will marry the human thought processes to the processes of the microcomputer. Thus, as the mechanical hindrances of the medium of message transcription are reduced, the communication ability of the individual will likely increase. The printed page will then become less of an impediment in the writing process: the printout or final visual display, coming at the end of the process, will not cramp the intellect; the human brain will be allowed freer and fuller range in its conceptualizing.

THE IMPACT ON TRAINING AND CONSULTING

Now all this sounds very good indeed. But will it really come to pass? I think we can be reasonably sure of the labor statistics. And, given the already exponential growth of computer technol-

ogy, the predictions about the inevitability of the automated office appear likely.⁸ Where then will the problems lie? What should trainers and consultants watch out for in the next decade? Will businesses be receptive to improving their employee's communication skills?

At the end of the seventies many businesses were clear in their intent to upgrade employee communication skills in the early eighties and beyond. Lahiff and Hatfield in 1978 found that banks and insurance companies were particularly receptive to the importance of communication in their organizations. They also noted there was a "significant trend toward providing more communication training to employees," especially increasing emphasis on writing.⁹ In a 1978 survey conducted by *The Corporate Communication Report*, over half of the 126 companies responding "had increased their employee communication significantly during the last two years, and 68 percent intend to do so in the coming two years. Not a single company had cut back in the last two years or intended to do so in the coming two years."¹⁰ If the businesses surveyed in these studies are truly representative, and if the Department of Labor and computer management experts are correct in their predictions, we can see that communication training and consulting could grow explosively in the next decade.

TOWARD THE NINETIES

The work force is aging. By 1990, the average worker's age will be 40 (in 1975 it was 28).¹¹ Increased average age coupled with the significant rise in the number of more highly educated, articulate white collar workers is going to reshape managerial style. Managers are going to see their tasks and responsibilities diffuse, spreading to a greater number of managers, even filtering down into the ranks. Autocratic orders barked from the top floor will fall on deaf ears, as employees become less impressed by *ex cathedra* pronouncements. Such commands will be ineffective—not because they will be difficult to understand but because they will be seen often as arbitrary or self-serving. Not only will workers demand to know the reasons for the organization's actions and policies; they will also want a voice in determining them. In short, workers will become managerial participants.

Participative management will democratize the workplace. The vitality of this democracy will depend on the intelligence of its

members and on their ability to engage in dialogue and skilled debate of the issues. Communication itself will truly become the nerve center of the system. Thus, if the trend toward increasing participative management continues, workers at all levels will need to acquire (or sharpen) their decision-making abilities. To perform effectively they will need to master interpersonal communication (speaking, listening, reading, body language), problem identification and articulation, formal presentation (oral and written), negotiations, information organization and flow, graphics, multiple media—in short, all that can possibly be learned about communication dynamics.

Training in these areas, as is true of training in general, will be seen by employees "as a right rather than an amusing and interesting sideline which is a diversion from . . . their ordinary job."¹² But even a so-called right to training will have to be somehow paid for. When the national economy is in decline, business budgets for training and consulting tend to shrink. If through the eighties we experience economic hard times, we can expect trouble in consulting and training, unless the consulting activities can be directly linked to measurable results. Trainers and consultants are going to have to *prove* that what they offer is essential to the welfare of the organization; costs will have to be reasonable and justified. Consultants, internal and external, are going to have to document through testimony, statistics, and comparative data that their activity has *more* than justified its cost. Consultant activity, in short, will have to look irresistibly inviting. Organizations will seek "a return in the form of increased productivity, greater efficiency, or enhanced organizational effectiveness."¹³ In hard times, people cannot really afford to fly by the seat of their pants, work solely from intuition, or justify a program because "it sounds kinda good."

Communications consulting is going to become increasingly competitive; organizations will have a rapidly growing number of sources to turn to for help. Internally, they will enlist the services of their training divisions and Human Resource Development centers. Lacking these, they might call on specialists in particular divisions (the Communications Division, for example) who would be willing to undertake communication consulting activities. Externally, the sources of help will continue to burgeon. Freelancers and moonlighting academics will abound. Within colleges and universities the adult education and continuing education centers will be developing extensive programs in communications.

Many organizations will work with schools to devise programs that fit specific communication needs (technical writing, graphics management, marketing communication). Communication workshops will multiply. These programs will be run by small independent consulting firms or individuals, as well as larger firms such as the International Writing Institute, Inc., or professional associations such as the International Communication Association. Publishers will continue to hawk all sorts of business communication self-help volumes. Correspondence courses will thrive. Soon, the individual with the home computer will be able to select Computer Assisted Learning programs in organizational communication to work at home after a bracing game of asteroids or space invaders. As the communication need grows, myriad ways of meeting that need will surface. Those who profess to have solutions to the problems will simply have to prove they are better than the competition.

To be competitive, consultants are going to have to implement and justify their activities carefully. As Human Resource Development Specialists (HRDS), communications professionals will have to aim at achieving *real* successes. The workers and managers they will analyze, counsel, and develop will have little patience with anything that does not translate directly into results. Theory will be acceptable only if it can yield effective solutions. As the workers' age and intelligence increase, so will their impatience with untried ivory-tower advice. Mature, intelligent workers will measure the consultant against their own extensive life experience. Workers will be hard to fool—in turn, they will not suffer a fool's advice gladly.

As workers demand transfer of skills from the classroom to the workspace, consultants will have to ensure that they respond to the needs and problems of the work place itself. Group needs will have to be carefully identified through intensive analysis. Problem areas will have to be determined, and solutions will have to be realistic. In communication training programs, for example, consultants will probably want to administer some form of pre/post testing. After the cures have been worked, follow up sessions will have to ensure success and, as much as possible, will have to help eliminate failure. Above all, for communication consulting success, the consultant will have to make sure that the client group is motivated to succeed. They will have to *want* to change, and the burden of convincing them that they can change will rest with the consultant.

The remainder of this book deals with these concerns. Of

course, it is impossible in such a small space to tackle all the problems that a consultant or trainer will face in communications, but this book proceeds under the assumption that some knowledge of these areas is better than none at all. What follows has come directly from the actual experience of the contributors. The intent of each contributor has been to offer advice to meet the needs of the consultant and the client. This advice has been tested in the roughest laboratory of all: the real world. Aware of the great need for communication consultants, and also aware of the competition in the next decade, these contributors demonstrate that consulting quality is their primary concern. Communications consulting, they know, has the potential to grow explosively in the upcoming years. But growth unchecked could result in a garden of weeds. The bad will choke out the good and the springtime promise of the garden will disappoint us come the fall. Careful tending, however, with foresight and guidance, will assure the profession of good trainers and consultants who will produce admirably. The following material embodies ideas and suggestions that will help to ensure that the decade ahead will be as fruitful as the signs portend.

NOTES

1. *Occupational Projections and Training Data, 1980*, Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics Bulletin 2052 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, Sept. 1980), p. 6.

2. M. L. Carey, "Occupational Growth Through 1990," *Monthly Labor Review*, 104 (August 1981), 45. The overall breakdown of percentage increases in new positions for white collar workers is this: professional and technical workers, 28.7 percent; managers and administrators, 19.1 percent; clerical workers, 24.7 percent; and sales workers, 24.4 percent. Also interesting to note are the percent increases for particular professions: computer systems analysts, 107.75 percent; nurses, 50.28 percent; lawyers, 37.85 percent; and public relations personnel, 26.06 percent. For a complete discussion of the Bureau's three projection scenarios (low trend, high trend I, and high trend II) see M. L. Carey, pp. 42-55.

3. The following growth and replacement figures (*numbers in thousands*) will put the total increase into perspective:

	Growth	Replacement	Total Openings
Professional & Technical.	2,600	5,700	8,300
Managers	2,100	5,000	7,100
Sales	1,700	3,100	4,800
Clerical	4,800	11,800	16,600
			36,800

From *Occupational Projections and Training Data, 1980*, p. 6.

4. J. J. Connel, "Office of the Future," *Journal of Systems Management*, 30 (February 1979), 6-10.
5. Connel, p. 7.
6. Connel, p. 9.
7. Louis Mertes, "The Professional Environment in the 21st Century," *Computer World*, 15 (September 1981), 36.
8. According to W. L. Rhodes, "Office of the Future: Light Years Away?" *Infosystems*, 28 (March 1981), 40. Data Corporation predicts there will be a \$15 billion market to modernize the office by 1984. Leonard Kruk, "Word Processing and Its Implications for Business Communications Courses," *The Journal of Business Communication*, 15 (Spring 1978), 17: "According to a report published by Frost and Sullivan, Inc., entitled 'Word Processing in the U.S.A.,' March 1975, automation of the office market by word processing equipment will reach 87 percent by 1984."
9. James Lahiff and John Hatfield, "The Winds of Change and Managerial Communication Practices," *The Journal of Business Communication*, 15 (Summer 1978), 27.
10. Sandra O'Connell, "Communication: Growth Field of the Seventies," *The Journal of Business Communication*, 15 (Spring 1978), 39.
11. Chip Bell, "Training and Development in the 1980s," *Personnel Administrator*, 25 (August 1980), 24.
12. George S. Odiorne, "Training to be Ready for the '90s," *Training and Development Journal*, 34 (December 1980), 20.
13. Irwin Scherman, "Training: Direction for the '80s," *Training and Development Journal*, 34 (January 1980), 50.

Toward Increased Productivity

This section focuses on training and consulting as activities that help reduce costs in an organization by promoting more effective interactions between management and employees. As indicated by its title, "Improved Communication: Improved Productivity" presents evidence that a direct link exists between communication and productivity. John Hollwitz and Eric Matthiesen suggest that management would be wise to acknowledge that communication affects employee motivation, morale, cooperation, and innovation. While more studies are needed, evidence already exists to show that organizations can significantly reduce expenses by investing in sound communication practices and training programs.

The remainder of this section presents the results of two studies that examine the state of training programs and consulting activities. L. W. Denton's "In-House Training in Written Communication: A Status Report" discusses the types of writing courses offered by various businesses and reveals the methods used to calculate program costs. Also discussed are training class size, number of contact hours, types of instructors, fees charged, and management's reaction to in-house writing courses. Denton also emphasizes the need to work on accurate ways to measure the effectiveness of these writing programs. This concern for accountability and measurement is a matter that confronts all communication consultants.

Linda Putnam's "Role Functions and Role Conflicts of Communication Trainers" focuses on two important areas: (1) content and evaluation of communication seminars, and (2) the diagnosis of organizational communication problems. Putnam points out that many of the respondents in her study demonstrated that the roles of trainer and consultant, though somewhat different, are in large part very similar. The one area most emphasized in both training seminars and in consulting was managerial effectiveness. In other words, respondents said they were being asked to approach communication as an aspect of leadership: effective leaders are effective communicators. Putnam's study also examines the idea that communication training enhances job performance and thereby increases productivity.

Improved Communication: Improved Productivity*

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A steady and significant decline in the growth of American productivity since the 1960s offers communication professionals—scholars, researchers, and consultants—a unique opportunity to influence improvement in corporate communication. The climate is ideal for persuading more corporations to invest in programs to improve their communication. During the 1970s, many top managers were reluctant to spend money on programs to improve communication because (1) the need to improve productivity was not urgent, and (2) claimed savings could not be directly measured. But given today's economic instability the need to reduce cost is especially urgent. Further, researchers have now linked improved communication to improved productivity. The task at hand is to inform corporate managers that the field of communication studies can contribute to the improvement of productivity. This can be done by sharing certain studies reported in the social research literature. This article summarizes studies relevant to productivity and discusses their application.

THE PRODUCTIVITY PROBLEM

To the economist, productivity is defined as the quotient of output divided by labor input. Hence, a company can improve its productivity by one of two ways: either it can produce more 'widgets' than the year before, without extra cost; or it can produce the same number of 'widgets' as the year before, but at a lower cost.

Unfortunately, American companies have not improved productivity at a rate equal to that of companies of other industrial nations. During the 1960s, U.S. productivity grew by more than 3

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percent a year; however, during the 1970s American productivity grew by only 1.4 percent. And by 1979, U.S. productivity actually declined by 2 percent while Japanese productivity increased by 8 percent.

Although American industry is acutely aware of the problem of declining productivity, today's corporate managers know that there is no productivity panacea. Many managers now conclude that the traditional methods for improving productivity are too costly, ineffective, or unlawful. Low profits and high business taxes, for example, presently preclude many companies from investing in new plants and modern equipment. Sharp reductions in government funding of research, coupled with pressure to reduce costs in order to combat inflation, now cause many companies to reduce research and development budgets. Finally, government regulations in the areas of antipollution, safety, and health equipment currently prevent companies from reducing support budgets.

In addition to their workability problems, conventional solutions, if adopted, would provide only partial answers to the production problem. Edward F. Denison of the Brookings Institute, a respected authority on U.S. productivity, has identified a list of sources that affect economic growth—amount of government regulation, capital investment, level of knowledge, etc.¹ Denison observes, however, that since 1973 productivity has declined in ways that his factors do not fully explain. He concludes that the impact of government regulations and other traditionally accepted barriers to productivity are not by themselves sufficiently strong to account for the dramatic slump in productivity.²

COMMUNICATION AND PRODUCTIVITY

David T. Kearns, president of the Xerox Corporation, is representative of those corporate managers who agree with Denison's analysis and have begun to seek alternative solutions to declining U.S. productivity. While Mr. Kearns concedes that Washington is part of the productivity problem, he contends that business management is also to blame.³ To support his thesis, he cites a 1979 study conducted by Theodore Barry and his Associates of Atlanta, Georgia, that blamed management for low productivity.⁴ This survey concludes that workers are only 70 percent efficient because of improper scheduling, staffing, discipline, and communication of assignments.

Joseph F. Toot, Jr., president of the Timken Company, argues that low levels of worker productivity are the result of failures in supervision.⁵ Among other shortcomings in supervision, Mr. Toot cites the absence of open channels of communication and then illustrates by relating an incident that occurred at one of his company's manufacturing plants. When one of two machines operated by a worker in this plant broke down about mid-morning, a utility helper who was nearby began to work on the machine. The worker continued to operate his second machine but took no action to inform his supervisor about the down machine. By early afternoon, the supervisor learned of the down machine from a bystander. Upon checking, the supervisor learned that the machine had been down two hours and seven minutes; moreover, the required repair was only a simple adjustment of tooling.⁶

One can only wonder why the worker had not alerted his supervisor. Surely, the supervisor expected to be informed, but had the supervisor communicated his expectation to the worker? Did the worker share the supervisor's concept of what a down machine meant—an urgent situation demanding immediate attention? Had the supervisor motivated the worker to communicate with him? Were the channels of communication between the worker and supervisor open?

IMPROVING PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Given the link between improved communication and improved productivity, this incident and many of the tens-of-thousands of similar incidents that occur daily need never happen. But are communication and productivity linked? Beyond the testimony of those in the work-a-day world, what is the basis for concluding that improved communication makes a difference in the level of productivity?

In order to answer this question, the authors conducted an extensive literature search. This search utilized four computerized data bases: *Comprehensive Dissertation Abstracts*, 620,000 citations; *Management Contents*, 56,000 citations in organization behavior and administration; *Social Scisearch*, 700,000 citations from social science journals; and *Psychology Abstracts*, 288,000 citations also from social science journals. These computerized data bases allowed the 'coordination' of the concepts "commu-

nication effectiveness" and "productivity" to produce a list of publications that pertain to both headings.

The results of the computer search were surprising. More than 50 citations were reported; however, after excluding those studies that did not pertain to organizational settings or that were dated, the authors were left with a total of four studies. To clarify, the authors have divided the relevant literature into two categories: (1) descriptive studies that report the experience of communication consultants, and (2) empirical studies that report experimental research.

Descriptive Studies

The computer search identified two articles of interest in this category. John Zenger, writing in the October, 1976, issue of *Personnel Journal*, reported that research conducted at Syntex Corporation provides convincing evidence that supervisory behavior affects the productivity of a work group.⁷ Honest communication in the form of free and open feedback, information sharing, and discussion was identified as important to the improvement of productivity.

Stewart Tubbs and Robert Widgery, writing in *Management Review*, November, 1978, report increased productivity in a large manufacturing plant following their recommendations as consultants.⁸ Productivity was improved by implementing a program designed to improve management style. This program stressed the importance of four management behaviors; (1) supportive relationships, (2) strong emphasis on goals, (3) the building of team effort, and (4) helping to facilitate the work of subordinates. The program also sought to strengthen the interpersonal communication skills and group skills of managers. Significant improvements, both statistical and financial, were reported.

Empirical Studies

In his 1977 dissertation, *A Study of the Relationships Between Organizational Communication and Worker Performance*, Kenneth Jenkins found evidence that a supervisor's communication effectiveness does indeed have an impact on worker performance.⁹ The subjects of this study were 238 workers in six manufacturing and service organizations. Dr. Jenkins employed the dimensions of perceived trust, perceived influence, perceived accuracy, and a

desire for interaction as measures of the independent variable, communication effectiveness. Worker performance, the dependent variable, was measured using four dimensions: quantity, quality, net performance (quantity minus performance quality), and absenteeism. Correlation between independent and dependent variables was found statistically significant using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients and moderated regression.

A dissertation by Rudi Klauss titled *Dimensions of Managerial Interpersonal Communication Behavior and Their Measure of Satisfaction and Performance* also reported evidence of a link between communication effectiveness and level of productivity.¹⁰ Three hundred forty-eight managers from manufacturing and marketing operations served as subjects for this study. Using a two-stage communication model, Dr. Klauss tested the relationship between the independent variable, interpersonal communication behavior, four intervening variables (subordinate role clarity, manager trustworthiness, manager informativeness, and manager dynamism) and three dependent variables (subordinates' satisfaction with supervision, job satisfaction, and work unit effectiveness). Employees rated managers on six dimensions: careful presentation of ideas; open, two-way communication; frankness; careful listening; brevity; and informality. Dr. Klauss then employed these scores as a measure of the independent variable, communication effectiveness. Employees rated managers on their trustworthiness, informativeness, and dynamism as measures of the intervening variables. Finally, employees completed surveys designed to measure their satisfaction and performance. The relationship between independent, intervening, and dependent variables was tested using multiple regression analysis, partial correlation analysis, and path analysis. Open, two-way communication showed a strong relationship between the intervening and dependent variable measures. Lesser levels of relationship between communication effectiveness and productivity were reported for brevity, informality, frankness, and careful presentation and listening.

In addition to breaking new ground in assessing the effects of communication within organizational settings, these studies illustrate the methodological problems encountered when researchers address the link between communication and productivity. How should the independent variable of communication effectiveness be operationally defined and subsequently measured? How should the dependent variable of productivity be operationally defined and then empirically measured? And most difficult of all,

how can intervening variables be controlled? The link between communication and productivity is complex and multivariate in nature.

CONCLUSION

Clearly, more studies are needed before the effects of communication effectiveness on productivity can be fully understood. Methodology must also be tightened and standardized. No doubt, however, communication researchers will improve their methodology and conduct additional studies of the link between communication effectiveness and productivity because they must if the expenditure of corporate money and time is to be justified.

Yet communication professionals need not await all the evidence before acting to persuade more corporations to invest in the improvement of their communication. The time is at hand. The opportunity before communication scholars and researchers may never be greater. There is no doubt that corporations need to increase their productivity. Strong initial evidence suggests that the advice and training programs offered by communication professionals are linked to the achievement of the business community's top priority—productivity. Corporations need the expertise of communication professionals and that advice should be forthcoming.

Such advice might include the following: managers would be well advised to keep employees aware of the importance of their job to the organization, to indicate frequently to their employees that their work is appreciated, and to inform their employees about developments in the company. Communication of this nature affects employee motivation and morale. Motivated employees are generally more productive.

It also appears important that managers adopt a "problem orientation" when communicating what needs to be done and how to do it. The goal of this kind of communication is to identify tasks and methods that are mutually acceptable to both the manager and the employee. A problem orientation is characterized by questions, descriptive, and provisional language. Communication of this nature affects employee cooperation. Cooperative employees are likely to be more productive.

Finally, managers should frequently talk with their employees and carefully listen to what they say. Most employees are in a

better position to observe problems than are managers. Moreover, many employees have analytical skills and are able to formulate solutions that are more objective than those of managers. Communication of this nature uncovers problems and encourages innovation. Listened to employees are apt to be more productive.

Achieving effective communication within the organization is a difficult task that is linked to the overall effectiveness of the organization. Management increasingly is becoming aware of the importance of this and is willing to invest in programs to improve their communication.

NOTES

1. John Berry, "Missing: \$40 Billion," *Forbes*, 121 (March 6, 1978), 70.
2. Berry, p. 70.
3. David T. Kearns, "Let's Take Risks Again," *Newsweek*, 96 (May 5, 1980), 13.
4. "Productivity—Reasons for Decline; Cures," report of Theodore Berry and Associates, Atlanta, Georgia, October, 1979.
5. Joseph F. Toot, "The Lost and Crucial Art: A Failure of Supervision," *Vital Speeches of the Day*, 45 (February 1, 1980), 237.
6. Toot, pp. 236-238.
7. John Zenger, "Increasing Productivity: How Behavioral Scientists Can Help," *Personnel Journal*, 55 (October 1976), 513.
8. Stewart L. Tubbs and Robin N. Widgery, "When Productivity Lags, Check at the Top: Are Key Managers Really Communicating?" *Management Review*, 67 (November 1978), 20-25.
9. Kenneth M. Jenkins, "A Study of the Relationship Between Organizational Communication and Worker Performance" (Ph.D. dissertation, Arizona State University, 1977).
10. Rudi E. Klaus, "Dimensions of Managerial Interpersonal Communication and Performance" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Rochester, 1977).

In-House Training in Business Communication: A Status Report*

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The purpose of this study is to present the results of an analysis¹ of 268 separate in-house courses in effective writing. The information, which was acquired through a survey, should partially fill an existing gap² in the literature, and this perhaps will be only the first of several detailed studies of in-house training in written communication.

Interest in continuing education, and especially in in-house training, is increasing at an unparalleled rate. These specific factors account for growth in continuing education:

1. Organizations now recognize the importance of in-house training in all areas, especially technology and management. Their concern is reflected both in expenditures and in training philosophy. William C. Norris, chairman and chief executive officer of Control Data Corporation in Minneapolis, reports that total expenditures for training in American industry currently are estimated at \$100 billion annually—or about the same amount spent for education at the primary, secondary, and college levels.³

The training philosophy many organizations now hold is reflected in this comment from John F. Regan, manager of training at Hercules: "Many companies today are no longer asking what it will cost to provide continuing education for their employees. Rather, they are asking what it will cost the company not to train its people and not to keep them up to date."⁴

2. Because most professionals now recognize that they must participate in continuing education programs to keep up with new developments in their fields, continuing education has become a way of life for many.

3. Many professional societies, such as the American Management Association and the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, have become vigorous supporters of continuing education

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programs. Their efforts have spurred the rapid development of training programs.

4. The increasing importance of employee training as a discipline is reflected in the increased stature of training departments, now often called departments of human resources or offices of managerial development.

Additionally, a growing national concern for literacy is evident, as indicated by several state-instituted literacy tests required of high school students and by university competency examinations in effective writing. Those who teach business and technical writing will attest to the spectacular increases in enrollment over the last four or five years, and all signs indicate that the demand will continue to spiral. Perhaps classicists would disagree that we are entering a "Golden Age" in which every individual is clearly concerned with effective written communication, but those of us who teach, write, and edit might cheerfully speculate that we are on the threshold.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study had these basic objectives:

1. To establish the percentage of organizations offering in-house training in written communication.
2. To determine what specific types of courses are offered (general writing skills, technical report writing, proposal writing, etc.) and to what types of audiences.
3. To determine how organizations calculate costs of offering training programs in written communication.
4. To determine other cost factors—how much the average organization spent on written communications programs during the last fiscal year and how much it costs to enroll a student in the average course in writing.
5. To determine specific characteristics of writing programs now available.
6. To determine how training officers assess future demand for in-house programs in writing.

METHODOLOGY

Questionnaires were sent to 900 organizations, ranging in size

from 50 employees to more than 100,000. These organizations were selected from the *College Placement Annual* (1977) in an effort to construct a sample consisting of organizations of a wide variety of types and sizes. Had the survey involved the usual Fortune 500, likely a much greater percentage of responses from organizations offering writing programs would have been received—simply because larger organizations are more likely to have in-house writing programs. But the survey indicates that organizations of all sizes offer writing programs.

Of the 900 organizations, 316 or 35 percent responded. The questionnaires were sent directly to the training managers of the organizations on the premise that training managers would know details about the courses themselves, about financing procedures, and other related matters.

FINDINGS

Of the 316 responding organizations, 123 (38.8 percent) offer one or more in-house writing programs. As Table 1 indicates, the responding organizations were of varying sizes, employing more than 100,000 employees. From the data in Table 1, we can draw these conclusions:

1. Only 29 percent of organizations with fewer than 5000 employees have writing programs, indicating that the smaller the organization is, the less likely it is to establish such programs. Of

TABLE 1
ORGANIZATIONS OF VARYING SIZES AND THEIR RESPONSES

Number of Employees	No Writing Courses	One or More Courses
50-1000	43	18
1001-5000	78	31
5001-10,000	23	27
10,001-25,000	34	27
25,001-50,000	8	13
50,001-75,000	2	2
75,001-100,000	3	1
100,001 and more	3	3
Totals	195	123

the 170 organizations with fewer than 5000 employees, 139 (or 82 percent) occasionally send employees to short courses in writing sponsored by universities or professional consultants.

2. Of the 132 responding organizations with between 5001 and 50,000 employees, 51 percent offer at least one in-house writing program, while 49 percent do not. Of the 65 organizations without programs, 74 percent occasionally send employees to outside short courses.

3. Responding organizations with 50,001 to 100,000 and more employees numbered too few for adequate evaluation.

One interesting observation from the data presented in the table: three organizations (major manufacturing corporations) with more than 100,000 employees each offer *no* in-house programs in written communication.

Types of Courses

As logically might be expected, the most common of the 268 writing courses were courses in general writing skills (see Table 2). These courses usually consist of units on basic writing principles and characteristics, grammar, punctuation, word usage, etc.,—sometimes set in a business/technical context and sometimes not. Usually the general writing courses are open to anyone interested in taking them.

TABLE 2
TYPES OF WRITING COURSES OFFERED

	Number	Percent
General courses in writing skills	84	31
Technical report writing	53	20
Business report writing	51	19
Business letter writing	51	19
Proposal writing	16	6
Specifications, manual writing, English to speakers of other languages	13	5
Totals	268	100

Technical report writing courses numbered 53 or 20 percent of the total. Courses in this category often emphasize writing skills common to science and industry, as well as report design, construction, and presentation. Engineers, scientists, and technicians are those identified as the usual students.

While there were 51 business report writing courses (19 percent of the total), there were also 51 business letter writing courses (19 percent), indicating a balanced demand for these two courses. As in the technical report writing course, emphasis in the business report writing courses is on report design construction, and presentation. In the letter writing courses, the most common letters studied are letters of inquiry, letters conveying favorable news, and letters conveying unfavorable news. Interestingly, one insurance company devotes one unit of its course to "Stall Letters"—letters designed to buy the company extra time. Business report and letter writing courses are taken most commonly by managers and supervisors.

Proposal writing, by virtue of its importance in many organizations, was the topic of 16 courses (6 percent). These courses emphasize the psychology of persuasion, marketing strategies, and the proposal evaluation process. These courses are taken primarily by engineers and managers.

Accounting for 5 percent of the total were 14 courses in various other areas, including specifications writing, manual writing, and English for speakers of other languages. The specifications writing courses are taken by engineers and technicians, and sometimes managers and supervisors. The manual writing courses are taken usually by technicians but sometimes by engineers. No particular job classification was identified for the English for speakers of other languages, but one assumes that foreign engineers and technicians are the usual students.

Determining Costs

As reported in training literature, a fairly standard means of calculating the cost to the organization of offering in-house courses is the 10 percent rule (see Figure 1). The procedure involves figuring 10 percent of the employee's annual salary, benefits, replacement and lost production costs, tuition, training department costs, and travel and living costs to determine the

Symbols	WS	=	Weekly Salary	
	B	=	Benefits	
	R&LP	=	Replacement and Lost Production Costs	
	O	=	Overhead Costs	
	Tu	=	Tuition Costs	
	TDC	=	Training Department Costs	
	Tr&L	=	Traveling and Living Costs	
Percent of				
Yearly Salary =	$\frac{WS + B + R\&LP + O + Tu + TDC + Tr\&L}{\text{Yearly Salary}}$			x 100
Cost for 5-day program for employee making \$10,000/year =	\$1534			
for employee making \$15,000/year =	\$2000			
for employee making \$20,000/year =	\$2466			

FIGURE 1

10 PERCENT RULE FOR ESTABLISHING TRUE TRAINING COSTS⁵

actual cost for placing an employee in a 5-day course. By adjusting the formula, one can determine costs for a 1-day program, etc.

Responses to a question about methods of calculating program costs indicate that 22 percent of the respondents follow the 10 percent rule or a similar procedure. But 78 percent either do not determine actual costs or do not use similar procedures. These figures indicate great variation between theory and practice in calculating course costs. Those who do not follow the 10 percent rule or do not calculate course costs made these comments about the 10 percent rule:

"... grossly inflated; only a training officer trying to justify his existence would come up with these figures."

"This is intangible, complex."

"We don't price out our courses in writing, though we do everything else."

"Use internal personnel; only costs figured are for the employee's time."

"Viewed as cost savings, not cost."

Those comments appearing most frequently were those indicating that the organization does not price out its courses in writing, though it does for all other courses, and those suggesting that in-house training is viewed as a *savings* and not an *expense*. Cer-

tainly there is a lack of consistency in calculating actual costs, indicating that each organization may calculate its costs to suit its own training philosophies and accounting procedures.

Average Cost for Enrolling Employees in Courses

The average cost per employee per day of in-house training in writing was \$78, with figures ranging from \$6 per day (usually including only costs for course materials) to \$250 per day (including all or more of the items called for in the 10 percent rule). Again, organizational accounting procedures are responsible for the wide variation in figures.

Expenses for Written Communication Training

The responding companies spent an average of \$8999.31 on communications training during the last fiscal year, with reported figures ranging from \$100 to \$78,000. Three organizations spent more than \$72,000 during the last fiscal year. No provision was made in the survey for determining exactly what expenses were included in the stated amounts.

Determining Quantitative Returns on Investment

Certainly the training literature and much of the management literature demand that an attempt be made to determine quantitative returns on investment in training. That is, ideally one should be able to report that Employee A, after completing a course in business report writing, can produce 23 percent more written material in 13 percent less time with 18 percent fewer errors, resulting in a net savings of \$1250 per year. Such statements *can* be made in some production situations where output can be measured accurately and the rate of error calculated by the number of faulty items produced. But writing skills measurement obviously is more complex.

In response to the questionnaire, 9.4 percent of the training managers indicated that they attempt to measure returns on investment in writing courses; 8.6 percent gave no response; and 82 percent said they do not or cannot measure return on investment for writing courses.

Those who do attempt to measure return on investment measure writing improvement primarily by pre- and post-testing and by time/management analysis.

Those respondents unable to determine quantitative factors in writing improvement made these comments:

"Impossible."

"Not worth the effort."

"Subjective."

"Not enough staff and time."

"Rely on supervisory feedback."

"Depend on percentage of correspondence returns."

One particularly skeptical training director of an organization with 50,000 employees said: "Evaluation stinks! We count bodies; that's about it!" Needless to say, great diversity of methods exists on the evaluation continuum.

Course Information

The survey provided useful information on course size, mechanics, and methodology, as well as on course instructors and fees paid to those instructors.

Average Size of Classes

As might be expected, average class size is smaller than that in the organization's academic counterpart. The average class size reported was 15.6 employees, with enrollment ranging from 3 to 30. The most commonly cited figure was 18.

Average Number of Student Contact Hours

The course averaged 16.5 student contact hours, ranging from 4 to 35 hours, with 12 being the most commonly reported number. The typical course meets twice a week for 2-hour sessions and runs for 4 weeks. A moderate number of classes are held at night on the employee's own time, freeing the organization from additional costs incurred by holding sessions on company time. Some organizations compromise, running 2-hour sessions, with one hour on company time and one hour on the employee's time.

Course Instructors

The survey reveals that training staff members make up the largest percentage of instructors of in-house writing courses (36 percent). College faculty make up the second largest group, but

only 19 percent. A logical combination of training staff members and company editor/writer accounts for 10 percent of the instructors, professional consultants for 8 percent, a combination of editor/writer and college faculty for 6 percent, company editor/writer for 4 percent, and various other combinations for 17 percent. No information was gathered about the qualifications of the instructors.

Fees Paid to Instructors

The average fee paid to instructors on in-house writing courses (excluding fringe benefits and expenses) was \$30.14 per hour, with reported figures ranging from \$6 per hour (usually training staff members) to \$110 per hour (usually professional consultants).

Course Methodology

Most courses are characterized by the use of a combination of lecture, group discussion, and workshop techniques, with workshop situations being the most common. Usually the courses involve the use of slide presentations and overhead transparencies, but a moderate number use, in addition to these methods, television, videotape, filmed presentations, and audio-tutorial packages. The most commonly cited printed text in use is Albert Joseph's *Put It In Writing*. Also mentioned were self-study packages prepared by Dow Jones and by the American Management Association.

Attendance Policies

Only 24 percent of the organizations *frequently* require employees to enroll in writing courses, while 30 percent *occasionally* require participation. Some 23 percent *rarely* require participation, while 23 percent *never* require it. Probably the different responses are based in part on the training philosophy held by the organization and on the specific needs of the employees.

"Canned" or "Individualized" Courses

Especially those courses presented by college faculty and professional consultants are labeled by 27 percent of the training managers as "canned" courses. But 73 percent label their courses as "individualized" courses tailored specifically to the organization's needs.

"Prestige" Courses?

Literature on designing and presenting in-house writing courses often suggests making the courses "prestige" items to attract enrollment. Some 35 percent of the training managers indicate that they do try to publicize their writing courses by advertising "limited enrollment" and by persuading top management to write memos stressing the selectivity factor. But 65 percent say they made no effort to give the courses added prestige. Several offered these comments: "No need to make it a prestige item, since we can't keep up with the demand now." "This is the most popular course we're running right now." "I wish all of our courses were as popular as our writing courses."

Miscellaneous Information

Of the three items in this section, the most encouraging one is the prediction by training managers that demand for in-house training will grow steadily.

Follow-up Programs

Only 37 percent of the organizations conduct follow-up programs after employees complete the writing courses. The average follow-up program is conducted 3 months after the course, but time periods range from 2 weeks to 4 years. Usually, the follow-up program consists simply of reviewing with the employee and his or her supervisor the employee's progress since the completion of the course.

Management's Reaction To Courses

Generally response from top management has been quite favorable. Some 72 percent of the organizations indicate that top management is very pleased with the written communications courses and with the results exhibited by employees completing the courses. But 9 percent indicate that management is unhappy because of (1) a lack of visible results or improvement, and (2) excessive costs for returns shown. About 19 percent indicated that they do not know whether management is pleased. Some of these believe that management does not even know that in-house writing programs exist within the organization.

Future Demand

The future for in-house training in writing looks bright, as 86 percent of the training managers foresee increased demand for the courses during the next 5 years. They also anticipate much larger enrollments in a greater variety of courses. Only 6 percent predict a decrease in demand, while 8 percent believe that demand will remain stable. These reactions indicate the exciting degree of demand that some organizations are now experiencing: "This is our hottest item right now!" and "Impossible to keep up with employee demand!" Three of the organizations indicate plans to hire writing specialists to teach writing courses.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In-house courses in written communication are prospering, and the demand for them is quite high in most organizations, as more employees recognize their need for training in effective writing. Those of us who have deplored the sad state of effective writing may now take consolation that the future looks bright as more concern for clear communication is evident; perhaps that Golden Age draws nearer.

Certainly some problems have resulted from rapid, often unstructured growth of in-house programs. The staffing of these courses with instructors who are not always highly qualified is a very real concern as we examine the in-house situation. And certainly better follow-up programs should be instituted. All of us who actively participate in the discipline can have a more positive effect on in-house programs by doing our share to promote, design, and teach in-house programs as effectively as possible.

These recommendations:

1. Closer monitoring of in-house writing programs needs to be accomplished through ABCA, STC, and other organizations concerned with continuing education in written communication. The International Association of Business Communication offers its members guidance and advice in establishing in-house writing programs. Other organizations should develop similar programs of assistance.

2. Much study remains to be done on the problem of measuring returns on investment in writing programs. Many are now saying that quantitative measurement of writing skill can be made—

well enough to justify the approach. Most of us will continue to agree that writing improvement measurement will remain primarily subjective, but more of us need to try quantitative measurements, to explore the concept, and to do research on this frustrating subject.

3. The survey indicates that in the training discipline a need exists for determining the advantages and disadvantages of detailed cost analysis in calculating expenses for writing programs. The problem is not so much our problem as it is the problem of training managers, but it is one that may affect the future of in-house training programs. So it should concern us all.

4. Research must continue on the structure of in-house writing courses—how they are organized, what content they contain, how they are presented, what kinds of assignments are best, and so on. Of particular interest will be psychological research in some areas. How much does employee attitude have to do with success or failure in writing courses? How many employees *act* interested in a writing course because they must? Which type of program creates the better learning situation—a one-day course or one spread out over 12 weeks?

We can anticipate the appearance of doctoral theses and other studies on in-house writing programs relatively soon. Certainly the time is here for close analyses of this important part of our discipline to appear in published form.

NOTES

1. I wish to express my appreciation to Dr. Chester Carroll, Vice President for Research, Auburn University, for a University Grant-in-Aid which funded this survey.

2. Most publications have dealt with designing and teaching in-house courses, but no extensive profile of existing courses in American organizations has been constructed recently.

3. "Training Talks to the Top," *Training*, 14 (October 1977), 31.

4. Howard J. Sanders, "Continuing Education: The Intensified Effort to Keep Up to Date," *Chemical & Engineering News*, May 13, 1974, p. 18.

5. From Patrick Suessmuth, "A Rule of Thumb Way to Determine Quickly the Real Cost of any Training Program," *Training*, 13 (October 1976), 44.

Role Functions and Role Conflicts of Communication Trainers*

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The demand for training and development activities in business and industry has doubled in the last ten years. Prior to this growth period, training programs were blended with personnel functions and assigned on an interim basis to a new employee in the department. But today human resource development is a bona fide, reasonably stable profession recognized for its contributions to organizational effectiveness.¹

Coupled with the growth of human resource development has been a concomitant increase in the availability of communication training. In their survey of 188 corporations, Lahiff and Hatfield report that accessibility to communication training has increased 21 percent during the last five years.² This finding is consistent with the perceptions of 118 trainers included in Wasylik, Sussman, and Leri's survey. Eighty percent of them claim that their home organizations are more concerned today about opportunities for communication training than they were ten years ago. Moreover, respondents in this survey regard communication training as an important ingredient in their departments' activities.³

This growth in importance and availability of communication training may reflect a company's efforts to meet the training needs of its employees. In a survey of district managers at Merck, Sharp and Dohme Pharmaceutical Company, supervisors mentioned development of effective communication skills more frequently than any other organizational problem. In a similar needs analysis study at General Electric Company, managers ranked communication and motivation first among the four top training needs.⁴

Implicit in this request is the belief that communication skills can be taught, that such abilities are valuable organizational tools, and that such training can improve employee performance.⁵ In effect, communication training is a legitimate organizational goal for practitioners.

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Yet, even with the sanction of communication training as a viable activity, we know only a modicum about the special functions of communication trainers in business and industry. Availability of such data would be beneficial in designing curriculum and courses for prospective trainers and in counseling students who express interest in this profession.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This survey aimed to discern the role functions and general competencies of communication trainers. More specifically, it focused on the way trainers execute two principal tasks: (1) selecting topics, teaching, and evaluating communication seminars, and (2) diagnosing and managing communication problems which occur within the organization. Previous research on communication training concentrated on public speaking skills, on the importance of communication skills, on the target groups of training, or on the attitudes of practitioners toward training.⁶ This study, unlike earlier research, centered on a trainer's role; in particular, on the way practitioners perform their teaching and consulting function.

For the purposes of this investigation, a role was defined as recurring actions of an individual interfaced with activities and expectations of others.⁷

Questionnaires were mailed to a random sample of 200 in-house trainers, personnel generalists, and external consultants who were members of the Southern Minnesota Chapter of the American Society of Training and Development (ASTD). Each survey form contained 24 questions which were partitioned into the following categories: seven items on the trainer's role as instructor, four questions on the consultant or problem-solving role of trainers, three items on the connections between training and company goals, and 10 questions on background and demographic information.

Since this sample tapped representatives of a professional association drawn from a regional rather than a national roster, several comments should be made on the generalizability of this study. ASTD is one of two major professional associations for organizational trainers, consultants, and human resource developers. The Southern Minnesota Chapter, with over 500 members, is one of the largest chapters in the nation. Most of its members are employed

in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, a locale which headquarters a number of large computing, food processing, hardware-manufacturing, financial, insurance, health-related, and government organizations. The diversity in size and type of organization included in this sample seems representative of other regional companies that employ employee training personnel.

Sixty questionnaires were returned from trainers who represented each of the diverse types of organizations included in the initial sample. The typical trainer ranged in age from 25 to 35, had an advanced degree or graduate work toward a degree, took one to three courses in speech-communication, had no coursework in journalism, and took four to six college courses in English.

FINDINGS

In general, communication trainers perceived their instructional and consultant roles as interpersonal functions which contributed to achievement of learning goals and to improvement of job performance.

Instructional Role of Trainers

Communication Topics

The first question on instructional role presented a list of thirty-four topics frequently covered in organizational communication classes and asked respondents to indicate which topics were taught as a special seminar or course unit in their communication training programs. The topics clustered into eight categories: interviewing, interpersonal communication, leadership communication, message dissemination, communication climate, presentational speaking, written communication and group communication.

Of the eight categories, leadership and interpersonal communication received the highest percentage of affirmative responses, 68 percent and 60 percent, respectively. Responses to each of the thirty-four areas are summarized in Tables 1 and 2. The six topics which two thirds or more of the trainers included in communication seminars were motivating people, performance appraisal interviews, delegating authority, participative decision-making, communication style, and listening.

An emphasis on dyadic relationship skills was an underlying

TABLE 1
COMMUNICATION TOPICS INCLUDED IN TRAINING PROGRAMS

	Percent of Affirmative Responses
Interviewing	51
Performance Appraisal Interviews	82
Employment Interviews	58
Counseling Interviews	43
Exit Interviews	23
Interpersonal Communication Skills	61
Communication Style	68
Listening	67
Coaching Skills	53
Nonverbal Communication Skills	50
Leadership and Communication	68
Motivating People	87
Delegating Authority	73
Giving Criticism	63
Handling Grievances	58
Giving Directions	57
Message Flow in Organizations	40
Downward Communication	48
Upward Communication	45
Lateral Communication	33
Rumor Channels	32
Communication Climate	53
Participative Decision-Making	72
Supportiveness Between Superior and Subordinates	60
Openness Between Employees	43
Trust and Credibility Levels Among Employees	43
Sufficiency of Information	23
Presidential Speaking	35
Use of Visual Materials	50
Sales Training	45
Presentation of Oral Reports	42
Persuasive Speaking	25
Written Communication	38
Memorandum and Letter Writing	63
Preparation of Technical Reports	38
Newsletters, Press Releases	12
Group Communication	37
Running Effective Meetings	53
Team Building	52
Conference Planning	28
Negotiation Sessions	20
T Groups, Encounter Groups	17

TABLE 2
COMMUNICATION TOPICS WITH
HIGHEST AND LOWEST PERCENTAGES

Rank	Ten Topics With Highest Percentages	Percent of Affirmative Responses
1	Motivating People	87
2	Performance Appraisal Interviews	82
3	Delegating Authority	73
4	Participative Decision-Making	72
5	Communication Style	68
6	Listening	67
7	Giving Criticism	63
8	Memorandum and Letter Writing	63
9	Supportiveness between Superior and Subordinate	60
10	Handling Grievances	58
Rank	Ten Topics With Lowest Percentages	Percent of Affirmative Responses
34	Newsletter and Press Releases	12
33	T Group and Encounter Sessions	17
32	Negotiation Sessions	20
31	Sufficiency of Information	23
30	Exit Interviews	23
29	Persuasive Speaking	25
28	Conference Planning	28
27	Rumor Channels	32
26	Lateral Communication	33
25	Preparation of Technical Reports	38

theme which unified these subject areas. Topics geared toward presentational speaking, group communication, message dissemination, and written skills received a moderate to low frequency of endorsement, with the exception of memorandum and letter writing which 63 percent of the practitioners incorporated into communication courses.

One plausible explanation for this emphasis on leadership and dyadic communication was that clients perceived these abilities as the most important and the most troublesome organizational

skills. Di Salvo, Larsen, and Seiler asked 170 business administration graduates who worked in entry-level industrial jobs to rate the potential contribution of ten communication skills to success in business. Employees viewed listening, routine information exchange, and advising as the three paramount skills for interaction with a superior, a subordinate, and a person outside of one's work group.⁸

Using the same ten communication proficiencies, Hanna and Wilson obtained from fifty managers rankings of the most troublesome communication areas. In this case the most salient skills were also the most troublesome; that is, listening and advising in conjunction with motivating people and delegating authority ranked as the most difficult yet the most critical communication abilities for success in business.⁹ By accentuating dyadic relationship skills and de-emphasizing presentational speaking, trainers in this study focused their instructional programs on the most important skills for success in business, the ones which frequently contributed to communication problems, and the ones which were more prevalent in terms of daily usage.¹⁰

Course Offerings and Instructional Objectives

Questions on the execution of instructional activities asked respondents to indicate on a five-point scale the extent to which they employed each alternative. Table 3 presents the mean rating, sum of ratings, and percentage of trainers who used each alternative to a great extent.

One of the items in this section probed the selection of communication topics for training seminars. Two-thirds of the respondents relied on requests by a particular department or by top management of the organization to determine course selection. Also, 49 percent of the trainers based their course offerings on needs assessment surveys; however, less than 10 percent of them used trainer preferences or topics taught in other training programs to decide which seminars to offer.

In like manner, a majority of the respondents based course objectives on needs assessment surveys and on course content. Of particular note, less than one-fourth of the trainers used attitude surveys to determine course offerings and objectives.

Trainers in this survey integrated needs of the learner with requests from top management to determine course offerings and class objectives. Within this role description, respondents obviated

TABLE 3
TEACHING AND COURSE EVALUATION FUNCTIONS OF TRAINERS

	Mean Rating	Sum of Ratings	Percent of Responses To a Great Extent
Basis for Communication Course Offerings			
		N=60	
The client or a particular department.	3.6	217	63
Top management.	3.4	205	62
Needs assessment.	3.2	189	48
Manager of the training department.	2.8	165	35
Attitude surveys	2.5	148	27
Trainer preference	1.8	110	8
Offered by other companies . . .	1.8	109	7
Basis for Course Objectives			
Needs assessment.	3.3	199	49
Course content	3.1	187	47
Skills trainers believe participants want	2.7	166	28
Attitude surveys	2.4	145	23
Objectives from previous courses	2.5	147	22
Teaching Methods			
Lecture-discussion	3.6	216	65
Application to participants' situation	3.5	208	55
Role playing.	3.1	187	45
Case studies	3.0	181	42
Media presentations.	3.2	189	40
Simulations	2.2	131	20
Lecture-participant presentation. . .	2.4	146	14
Videotaping of participants. . . .	2.4	134	15
Evaluation Methods			
Individual testimony from participants	3.4	204	57
Postconference checklist.	3.0	185	47
Qualitative assessment of skills acquisition	2.7	159	28
Postconference interviews.	2.6	155	25
Evaluation of instructor	2.9	174	25
Quantitative assessment of goals achieved	2.3	135	18
Cost-benefit ratio	1.6	97	3

a common but ineffectual practice of designing programs to satisfy the intellectual interests of the training managers.¹¹ Yet, only 49 percent of the practitioners conducted full-scale needs assessment surveys and 67 percent geared topic selection to meet requests of top management.¹² Hence, while communication trainers were receptive to the needs of the client, they tempered their responses to meet the concerns of top management. In addition, topic selection and course design emerged from a one-to-one relationship with the individuals who requested training rather than a more widespread needs assessment survey.

Instructional Methods and Evaluation Techniques

Use of teaching methods and course evaluation techniques reinforced this dyadic role relationship between the communication trainer and the target group. Although lecture-discussion methods ranked first in overall frequency of use, over 40 percent of the practitioners incorporated role-playing, application of content to participants, case studies, and media presentations as instructional techniques. Because of ease in preparation and integration of content material, it was expected that a majority of trainers would rely on lecturing as an instructional tool. However, the extent to which instructors involved clients in learning experiences was higher than anticipated.

This involvement of the participant continued into the course evaluation stage. The two evaluation tools which approximately half of the respondents employed were testimonies from participants and postconference checklists. Both methods were more interpersonal and more difficult to substantiate than the two procedures which received the lowest frequency of endorsement, cost-benefit ratio of the program and quantitative assessment of the participant's job performance.

Consulting Role of Communication Trainers

In addition to instructing seminars and conducting workshops, trainers frequently diagnosed and managed communication problems which surfaced in the organization. Even though the functions of a consultant differed somewhat from those of an instructor, participants in this study demonstrated a strong similarity between the two roles. In particular, both positions evolved from and seemed dependent upon the interpersonal relationship between client and trainer.

The type of communication problems that respondents frequently encountered paralleled the topic areas that the majority of practitioners included in training seminars. That is, in their consultant role, 70 percent of the communication trainers frequently confronted difficulties in leadership skills, *e.g.*, listening, delegating, guiding, and motivating employees; these were the same topics taught in communication workshops by at least two-thirds of the respondents.

In a similar fashion, less than one-third of the trainers incorporated such topics as conflict between departments, message distortion, and public speaking into their consulting or instructional activities. Table 4 presents mean ratings, sum of ratings, and percent of respondents who encountered each communication problem.

On the whole, the correspondence between seminar topics and communication problems suggested that respondents adapted training programs to the communication needs of their clients. In fact, when trainers indicated the extent to which they employed six diagnostic and problem-reduction techniques, 43 percent of them offered training sessions to confront communication breakdowns. Also, interviews and private counseling with employees were used frequently to diagnose and manage communication ills. Consistent with their dyadic role definition, trainers rarely employed attitude surveys or group techniques such as organizational development or t-group to analyze and resolve communication dilemmas.

When asked which sources served as contacts about communication problems, the majority of trainers selected managers or employees of a work unit as primary contacts. Secondary sources included managers of the training department and staff who conducted attitude surveys.

Hence, the dual instructional-consultant function of communication trainers, as defined by participants in this study, involved diagnosis, design, implementation, and evaluation characterized primarily by interpersonal contacts between client and trainer. In the diagnostic stage, practitioners relied on individuals who requested training and employees of the work unit where the problems were identified to determine training needs and to analyze communication problems. Respondents designed and implemented training seminars with topic selection, course objectives and teaching methods geared to the needs of the learner. For evaluation of communication training, practitioners employed testimonies from participants and postconference checklists.

TABLE 4
CONSULTING AND PROBLEM-SOLVING FUNCTIONS OF TRAINERS

	Mean Rating	Sum of Ratings	Percent of Responses To A Great Extent
Extent to which Trainers Encounter Communication Problems		N=60	
Improving managerial effectiveness	3.8	228	70
Promoting shared information . . .	3.4	205	47
Developing flexible management style	3.4	204	43
Building cohesiveness	3.3	200	43
Developing trust levels	3.3	200	42
Improving interviews	3.0	182	42
Reducing message distortion	3.0	182	37
Improving committee meetings . .	3.0	178	33
Improving public speaking	2.8	167	25
Handling hostile customers	2.7	160	25
Reducing conflict between departments	2.8	171	23
Counseling personal problems . . .	2.5	154	23
Contacts about Communication Problems			
Managers in the department where the problem occurred	3.3	197	48
Employees in that department . . .	3.2	192	45
Manager of the training department	2.7	167	27
Personnel staff through attitude surveys	2.4	141	17
Diagnostic Tools for Managing Communication Problems			
Interviews with employees	3.2	194	43
Private counseling with individuals	3.1	186	43
Seminars on communication problems	3.0	185	43
Organizational development	2.4	141	23
Attitude surveys	2.5	155	17
T-groups	1.2	74	5

Communication Training: Links to Job Performance and to Company Profitability

At one time management regarded training as a fringe benefit or a bonus for exceptional employees. In this framework, practitioners were cast as deliverers of instruction who specialized in training packages and in "dog and pony shows." But as trainers began to link their activities to performance and to problems within the organization, the image of training evolved into an enterprise which fostered self-improvement of the participant. This had the potential to reduce costs and thereby contribute to company profitability. Thus, some professionals began to treat cost-effectiveness, impact on profitability, and contribution to job performance as the ultimate standards for determining program effectiveness.¹³

Based on these standards, three questions in this survey asked respondents if they had linked communication training to job performance, company profitability, and interrelationships between business and the outside community. In response to the first item, 67 percent of the trainers claimed that they had taken measures to integrate communication training with job performance. The type of measures, as revealed in an open-ended question, clustered into four areas: (1) identifying performance deficiencies prior to training and designing special seminars to correct these inadequacies, (2) conducting communication training in conjunction with on-the-job functions, (3) requiring participants in training seminars to establish learning objectives then conducting follow-up sessions to determine if these objectives were met, and (4) incorporating performance appraisal procedures into the learning goals and overall assessment of training programs.

On the second item, 46 percent of the respondents contended that they had interfaced training goals with company profitability. Such connections include linking communication training to performance, then performance to productivity, using communication seminars to improve product development and to increase sales margins, and designing communication training to be cost-efficient.

In essence, approximately one-half of the practitioners attempted to demonstrate that communication training contributed to job performance and to productivity. These goals were consistent with findings of the Wasylik, *et al.*, investigation in which practitioners considered increased productivity and information exchange as the primary goals of communication training.

On the other hand, only 32 percent of the respondents linked communication training to improved relationships between business and the community. Several individuals commented that public relations personnel assumed these duties. But those who presented an affirmative response to this item mentioned: providing public speaking consultation to nonprofit groups, conducting communication courses for customers, coordinating a college student internship program, and developing training packages to be used by other organizations. It appeared then that advancement of company productivity and improvement of employee job performance were sound objectives for communication training, but improving relationships between business and the community was not a predominant aim of training activities.

DISCUSSION

Even though participants in this survey took steps to unite communication training with productivity and job performance, the way they carried out their instructional and consulting functions seemed to counteract these efforts. For the most part, practitioners employed assessment and evaluation methods which enhanced interpersonal relationships between target groups and trainers, but which provided minimal evidence for the connection between communication training and company profitability.

Reliance on requests by individual departments or by top management for offering training activities might meet the needs of the target group, but might not provide data for justifying the scope and cost of such training nor for the program's contribution to job outcomes. Correspondingly, the use of testimonies and postconference checklists for evaluating communication training, although an indication of a practitioner's ability to adapt his or her program to the client, seemed ineffectual for demonstrating that participants met training objectives or that they experienced a behavioral change, or that the company derived some benefit from the program.

An explanation for this apparent incongruity between job functions and ascribed goals resides with research on role theory. Since employees derive their role definitions from job-related behaviors and from expectations that others have about these behaviors, it is plausible that contradictory messages regarding the goals of communication training intensify role complexity and lead to role conflict.

That is, the development of communication programs to meet the learning goals of clients may conflict with designing these activities to contribute to company profitability. Compliance with one of these goals then ostensibly hinders achievement of the other. Moreover, the greater the perceived disparity between the two, the more pronounced the role conflict, and the greater the potential for negative psychological reactions. Although trainers may experience dissonance from this role conflict, they, no doubt, develop coping mechanisms and means of resolving this incongruity.¹⁴

Recent trends for practitioners point to implementation of learning theories, needs assessment programs, and measurable criteria for the effectiveness of instructional and problem-solving activities. These changes, at first, may contribute to role conflict, but they have potential to enhance the viability and continued growth of training endeavors. No doubt it is difficult to assess and to justify the direct contribution of communication training to an organization. Yet, in an era of accountability, the dividends may well exceed the expenditures required to implement such measures.

NOTES

1. George S. Odiorne, "The Hard Technologies of Training," *Training and Development Journal*, 31 (October 1975), 3-6.

2. James M. Lahiff and John D. Hatfield, "The Winds of Change and Managerial Communication Practices," *The Journal of Business Communication*, 15 (Summer 1978), 26.

3. James E. Wasylik, Lyle Sussman, and Robert P. Leri, "Communication Training as Perceived by Training Personnel," *Communication Quarterly*, 24 (Winter 1976), 32-38.

4. Thomas Lewis and Morris Focklee, "Help, My Training Program Bombed," *Training*, 13 (June 1976), 26-27, 30; and Edward Thorne and Jean Marshall, "Managerial-Skills Development: An Experience in Program Design," *Personnel Journal*, 55 (January 1976), 15-17.

5. See, for example, Wasylik, *et al.*, p. 36; Gary Rummler, "How To Determine What Problems Can and Can't Be Resolved," *Training*, 13 (August 1976), 18-21; and James Gormally, Clara E. Hill, Nancy Gulanick, and Thomas McGovern, "The Persistence of Communication Skills for Undergraduate and Graduate Trainers," *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, (April 1975), 369-372.

6. See Mason Hicks, "Speech Training in Business and Industry," *Journal of Communication*, 5 (Winter 1955), 161-168; Harold P. Zelko, "Trends in Oral Communication Training in Business and Industry," *Journal of Commu-*

nication, 12 (June 1962), 106-116; Mark L. Knapp, "Public Speaking in Business and Industry: Policies, Publications, and Publicity," *The Journal of Business Communication*, 5 (Spring 1968), 3-10; and Wasyluk, *et al.*, 32.

7. Daniel Katz and Robert L. Kahn, *The Social Psychology of Organizations* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1978).

8. Vincent Di Salvo, David C. Larsen, and Willam J. Seiler, "Communication Skills Needed by Persons in Business Organizations," *Communication Education*, 25 (November 1976), 271-275.

9. Michael S. Hanna and Gerald L. Wilson, "Organizational Behavior Modification and Management by Objectives," a paper presented to Central States Speech Association, Detroit, April 1977.

10. In addition to Di Salvo, *et al.*, and Hanna and Wilson, see E. T. Klemmer and F. W. Snyder, "Measurement of Time Spent Communicating," *The Journal of Communication*, 22 (June 1972), 142-158.

11. See, for example, Rummier, p. 19; Lewis and Focklee, p. 27; and Frederick Antil, "Meeting and Training Challenge," *Personnel Journal*, 54 (October 1975), 536-546.

12. Some theorists contend that trainers spend too much time worrying about pleasing top management and too little time analyzing how training can contribute to organizational effectiveness. See Benjamin B. Tregoe, "Management Development: Where Are We Headed," *Training*, 12 (November 1975), 21-23.

13. See, for example, Joe Harless, Don Schrello, Francis Rebedeau, and Abbott P. Smith, "Looking Ahead-1976," *Training and Development Journal*, 32 (January 1976), 24-30; and Richard Morano, "Measurement and Evaluation of Training," *Training and Development Journal*, 31 (July 1975), 42-46.

14. See Katz and Kahn, p. 204.

The Consulting Business

Communications consulting can take many forms; the only limitations are the needs of the client and the consultant's ability to fulfill those needs. Consultants who feel most comfortable in the classroom may well want to concentrate primarily on in-house training programs. For others, less public exposure is desirable; these consultants would rather contract for work and sell the product itself to the client. Commonly known as "free-lancers," such consultants in the coming years will find an abundant need for their services. This section discusses both kinds of consulting and offers many practical suggestions on how to launch an active consulting business.

Reminding us that "almost every commercial enterprise is a prospective user of communication consulting services," Frederick Harbaugh recommends ways (other than training) by which consultants can successfully break into the market. Editing reports, writing marketing literature, and designing training materials are just a few of the opportunities available. "Nontraining Consulting" exposes the concern for confidentiality of proprietary information, revelation of client identity, and other ethical matters consultants face. Step-by-step, Harbaugh reveals the anatomy of a good proposal, including such sensitive topics as guaranteed and optional services.

More ideas on how to build a solid reputation in consulting are advanced in "Writing for Profit: A Catalog of Hints." Carol Barnum, like Harbaugh, offers hints for the practitioner who may want to avoid the training arena and desire instead to focus on the written product. She explains how to build the all important portfolio through establishing the right contacts, varying approaches, and writing personal experience features. Much work is available in writing for direct mail companies, retailers, public relations and advertising firms, charitable organizations, public interest groups, and the news media. The nontraining, free-lancing consultants need only apply their specialties to organizational and community needs.

One specialty that promises to grow in the next few years is medical communications. In "How to Enter the Field of Specialized Writing for Nursing," the Ceccios foresee a large consulting/training market in adult nursing education. They offer six strategies for entering the field and also provide an extensive listing of helpful books, indexes, and periodicals for communicators interested in medicine.

For those who wish to learn more about opportunities in speech, Wayne Pace presents the results of his survey of "Consulting Opportunities for Speech Communication Faculty." He enumerates over twenty separate types of consulting available in five broad organizational categories. Pace's queries of practicing speech consultants from around the country (with from five to forty years experience) turned up many ideas on ways to establish a practice and ways to assure a high quality delivery.

Probably the most comprehensive look at the vital considerations in setting up a consulting firm is Peter Clarke's "Obtaining, Negotiating, and

Pricing Your First Consulting Job." Clarke's article fully rounds out this section because, though aimed specifically at writing/speech communication teachers, the advice is pertinent to anyone, free-lancer or trainer, who wishes to establish a practice. Clarke advises that beginning consultants not aim too high; instead, they should concentrate on the small- to medium-sized organizations. Financial considerations (for accounting and tax purposes), office set-up, and periodicals indispensable to the consultant are carefully discussed, as are ways to find consulting work. Interestingly, Clarke recommends that the beginning consultant give public lectures and publish articles for exposure rather than try advertising and direct mail solicitation. Most helpful to beginning consultants is his extensive discussion of pricing; here he includes a formula for profit/cost estimation and presents the five kinds of agreement usually entered into between client and consultant. All in all, Clarke's advice throughout is realistic and sensible—a sound basis upon which to establish a consulting practice.

Nontraining Consulting: Get Your Feet Wet

Frederick W. Harbaugh

Most ABCA members who consult in the business community appear to lean heavily toward training, probably because—as academics—they feel a kindred spirit in classroom situations. However, business and industry also offer opportunities for *nontraining* consulting in the field of business communication, and developing them can be professionally broadening, satisfying, and profitable.

Nontraining opportunities are perhaps less likely than training opportunities to arise unsought, but they are no less desirable on that account. I believe ABCA members should be encouraged to seek nontraining consulting opportunities, and I write this to offer such encouragement.

MARKET SCOPE

The market for nontraining consulting in business communication spans a wide range of technical, semitechnical, and nontechnical (mostly marketing, advertising, and administrative) media in business and industry. The consultant exercises professional communication skills to inform, instruct, or persuade customers, service people, vendors, employees, government agencies, or the public, or to help others do so.

Whereas training consulting typically involves systematic instruction, exercises, and feedback or evaluation, nontraining consulting typically involves a product such as a handbook, brochure, report, or proposal whose production typically requires such support services as researching, writing, and editing. Many companies, especially the larger ones, employ staff writers and editors for such tasks; but many others do not. Even among those that employ staff writers and editors, some hire outside consultants for their objectivity on special projects, or to accommodate temporary overloads.

Thus, almost every commercial enterprise is a prospective user of communication consulting services, not only for its special

training needs, but also for its special publication needs. The reasons for this are interesting and sometimes amusing.

MARKET BACKGROUND

Companies that employ staff writers and editors sometimes find them overloaded just when a large unplanned project looms. Or they may feel that a certain project requires freedom from industrial bias or demands the special expertise of an outside consultant. Or they may simply wish to produce a particular publication without the knowledge of their employees.

In any case, every commercial enterprise sooner or later needs consulting communication assistance. Sadly, when they most need such assistance, many have no idea where to go for it.

Companies that employ no staff writers or editors tend to rely on the communication skills of their managers and the editing of their secretaries. However, those that are intelligently managed sometimes recognize their need of professional help in producing important publications or in solving special business communication problems. When they do, they are likely to call an advertising agency or public relations firm unless they know that a competent private consultant is nearby and available.

The way to get the work is to make yourself known to those who may need your help. You can do so discreetly or overtly, as you wish. Where dignity, propriety, and modesty permit, I recommend overtly advertising your availability and your willingness to discuss rates or fees, using whatever modes you feel most comfortable with.

MARKET APPROACH

I'm going to assume that the reader of this article is a generally competent and resourceful practitioner and arbiter of business communication, skilled in the arts of English rhetoric, grammar, idiom, usage, style, and punctuation; familiar with the leading conservative authorities therein; and proficient in outlining and organizing information.

On that ground you can legitimately hold yourself out as a consulting business journalist for the writing or editing of a wide range of business and industrial publications including:

- a. Internal and external reports
- b. Marketing literature
- c. Contract proposals
- d. Form letters
- e. Employee handbooks
- f. Training materials
- g. Product operation and maintenance instructions

For the latter, of course, you may feel unqualified to write or edit unless you understand the idioms and conventions of any technical disciplines involved in the concerned product's design or operation. But that should be a secondary consideration: you're there mainly as a communication consultant, and your literary skills are what chiefly commend you.

Your market approach should target prospective clients as directly and candidly as possible. Ideally this would include both face-to-face personal solicitation (where you know or can arrange to meet the individuals with authority to commit for consulting services) and conventional advertising in media appropriate to your circumstances and purposes.

You may find it helpful to offer free consultation to discuss the kinds of counsel or assistance you offer to provide—the foot-in-the-door ploy—with or without using the so-called information interview ploy. But make it known, any way you can, that you are seeking opportunities to serve the business community.

Always carry a supply of business cards, and seek opportunities to give them to all who appear likely to need your services, or likely to know others who may. If you're employed by a college or university, you can use the school's stationery for all your professional correspondence, though I think the cost of personalized professional stationery is amply justified.

However you approach the market, think of yourself as a worthy professional and a blessing to those who need your services. Present yourself confidently.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

You will find it salutary, I think, to adopt for yourself a simple code of ethics, and keep it clearly enough in mind that you can discuss it without hesitating.

An ideal code of ethics, I think, should seek to protect the client, the practitioner, and the profession itself from obloquy,

ridicule, contempt, embarrassment, or annoyance of any avoidable kind, either deserved or underserved. Thus, in most circumstances it should be sufficient simply to play the role of gentleman or lady in the traditional sense.

However, nontraining consulting is particularly likely to expose the consultant to information proprietary to the client, and the consultant should be prepared for this. Assure the client of your competence and intent to protect the client against compromise of any proprietary information to which your work exposes you, and to maintain an attitude of confidentiality toward all client-related information.

Beyond that lies the matter of client privacy and identity, on which opinion is divided. Many consultants in our field see nothing wrong in emulating the tradesman's practice of huckstering their services on the basis of "a partial list of satisfied customers." I take the conservative view that a legitimate consultant in business communication should protect the clients' privacy and identity with the same quiet consistency of a legitimate physician or lawyer protecting the patients' or clients' privacy and identity.

In short, I advocate boasting to no one about the name of any client. If you have an uncontrollable urge to identify your clients, obtain their written permission to do so, with the signature of a responsible executive representative of the client.

FEE PROTOCOL

It is, of course, unfeasible to quote a fee for any service until the service is reasonably well defined. What are the client's specifications? When must the work be delivered? Can the job be quantified at all, so as to permit quoting a fixed fee, or is it so indefinite that only an estimate—or perhaps an hourly rate without an estimate—will do? Also, "What else should I know about the job?"

Here you must exercise discretion. Wherever possible I prefer to quote a fixed fee, but many jobs resist the necessary definition for that. In such cases I advise deferring all talk about money until the job is as well defined as can be expected. At that point I like to submit a formal proposal outlining everything relevant to the job as I understand it, together with my proposed quality standards, service options, incentive pricing where applicable, and warranty of client satisfaction. We'll discuss these things in the subsection about proposals.

However, since we're talking about fees as such, you need to decide how to value your time. This tends to be a very personal matter, but I suggest you ask around and try to get a feel for the market in your area. In urban areas, where you find most of the consulting action, the prevailing rate will probably range from \$50 to \$100 per hour according to the disciplines involved, but negotiation will give the answer.

I would strictly advise against knowingly selling your services below the market; it's unfair to your fellows as well as to yourself, and it will earn no respect for anyone.

ANATOMY OF A PROPOSAL

According to the perceived magnitude and complexity of the job, the client may or may not request a formal proposal. However, I prefer to submit proposals for all but the smallest, most perfunctory tasks. The proposal affords a convenient medium for defining the job, and, if it is adequately written, can be incorporated by reference into the terms of a client's purchase order or memorandum contract.

Without a proposal or other means to define a job, the door stands open for misunderstanding or abuse of the terms you think are mutually understood and agreed.

As a business communication professional you already know what a proposal should include. However let's consider some proposal elements that I regard as particularly important in bidding writing or editing jobs. They are:

Scope of work. Define it as specifically as possible. If there is to be a tangible end product or "contract article," identify and describe it unmistakably. At the end of this section refer to *optional services* to be described later in the proposal.

Delivery. Commit to or propose a specific delivery date.

Literary standards. Here state plainly what rules and authorities you will follow, and mention also the physical standards you will follow in preparing the contract article.

Technical standards. (For example, "To the extent that technical words, abbreviations, or symbols are necessary in the text or tabular matter, the form and usage will follow those recommended by the IEEE or ASME, as applicable.")

Fee quotation and terms of payment. State unmistakably the contemplated fee basis and how and when the fee is to be paid.

Include details about invoicing practices and expected promptness of payment. Where applicable, consider offering to reduce the fee by, say, 10 percent if the client agrees to give you conspicuous byline credit or other appropriate credit on all copies of the published contract article.

Warranty. Here you should warrant your service or product to be fit for its intended purpose, compliant with any applicable client specifications, and acceptable to the client as submitted or equitably adjustable to the client's satisfaction. You should also disclaim legal liability of every kind in connection with the use of the contract article by the client or others.

Optional services. Where applicable, for additional compensation (to be negotiated), offer to accommodate the client in handling such peripheral tasks as producing necessary artwork, preparing cameraready originals, arranging for printing and binding, etc. The availability of such options can tilt a job toward the consultant who offers them.

Bid expiration. Always specify a date after noon or midnight when your proposal will become void, unless it is earlier withdrawn, accepted, or extended in writing.

INVOICING

In your proposal, under *Fee quotation and terms of payment*, you presumably will have explained your invoicing pattern. Follow it to the letter.

On each invoice be sure to include the current calendar date, the client's company name and mailing address, the client's contract or purchase order number if any, and the name of the person through whom the invoice must be processed for approval to pay.

Be sure also to detail each invoice fully, giving all relevant support information. With expense reimbursement invoices, attach receipts for any receipted charges, and mention the applicable mileage rate in claims for reimbursement of automobile travel.

If your contract or purchase order authorizes reimbursement of expenses in addition to payment for your services, I suggest separate invoicing. It's well to distinguish as clearly as possible between expense reimbursement and income, for tax purposes.

Have you tried nontraining consulting? If not, get your feet wet.

Writing for Profit: A Catalog of Hints*

Carol M. Barnum, *Southern Technical Institute*

As a teacher of Business Communication, you know the nuts and bolts of good writing. You put your practices to work in the classroom training future business men and women in the techniques that will earn them good jobs, advancements up the professional ladder, and money in their pockets. Why not put some of that expertise to work for yourself? Write for profit. Writing for profit is interesting, challenging, creative, and most important, manageable within an already busy schedule. But the business of writing for profit is not an easy one to break into without experience and especially without the all-important "portfolio" of writing products to show the potential client.

Nonetheless, if you've contemplated exploring the marketplace but are unsure just what it is and how one gets into it, you need to begin by assessing your skills in relation to the market.

WHAT'S IN STORE

Writing for profit encompasses a broad field of possible approaches. You can write catalogs for retail merchants; direct mail pieces for large and small companies in wholesale and retail markets; brochures for products, concepts, or services; stories and features for newspapers and popular or trade journals on the local, regional, and national level; and much, much more. Many of these kinds of jobs are free-lanced (that is, they are not written in-house or by an agency), and most businesses are on the lookout for fresh ideas and fresh faces.

In your city—Boston, Philadelphia, Albuquerque, or Atlanta—people need writers. Always. There's a constant demand for new blood in the business. In Atlanta, for example, the two major department stores, Rich's and Davidson's, have regular copywriting staffs, but they are often in need of back-up help during promotions, Christmas rush, and particularly for the ever-increasing direct mail trade. Rich's, for instance, has eight staff writers for daily newspaper

*This article originally appeared in *The ABCA Bulletin*, 44 (March 1981), 14-16. Reprinted by permission of the publisher and the author.

advertising but no staff writers for direct mail. It's all free-lanced. And, of course, countless smaller stores and specialty shops use advertising more and more through direct mail sales letters, catalogs, and fliers.

HOW TO BREAK INTO THE MARKET

Armed with your considerable analytical skills, your A's in English from your college days, and your ability to recognize effective, clear writing from years of teaching communication skills, you know, even without any actual hands-on experience, that you can write as well as, or better than, what you currently see in print or find stuffed in your mailbox.

Your course is clear. You need to get some experience in writing. But how to get it? And how to build that all-important portfolio? The old adage—you can't get experience without experience—holds true in the business of writing catalogs and other pieces for profit, too, but there are ways to circumvent this barrier. What follow are some helpful hints to get you started—the kinds of tips that people already in the business know (because they used them once themselves) but don't usually share.

Hint No. 1

Write for free. Don't be aghast. You won't have to do it for long, just long enough to get some writing samples.

Once, when I was fresh out of college (with no previous writing experience) and eager to find work in a competitive market, I wrote press releases for the public relations department of the local Red Cross so they could see how I would perform on the job. The position I was applying for wasn't funded, but I got the press releases for my portfolio, and these later helped me land a job as a copywriter for a public relations firm. In that same initial job search I also covered a town meeting for a local newspaper and wrote an article for the paper as a trial-run for employment. I didn't get the job and they got a free article for their paper, but I once again got a portfolio addition.

Who to write for, even for free? Your church or civic organization, for example. They're probably eager to have your services for brochures, newsletters, adult education catalogs, etc. Write for your local newspaper, too. Many newspapers take feature articles,

special interest stories, book reviews, and more on a free-lance basis. Even if the article isn't used, you've still got it for your portfolio for others to see.

Hint No. 2

Use your contacts in business to your best advantage. Everybody knows people who are working! Do they or their firms need your help? Volunteer your services to write the mailer or catalog or brochure they need. While free-lance copy generally sells for \$15 to \$30 an hour or for a total-package price, you can give them a special rate or price since you know them, which gives you both a break.

Are there particular shops or retail outlets you frequent? Do the owners advertise? If they do, ask them who does their work. You might be able to contribute in this area. Or if they are not presently advertising, you might be able to generate interest in your services.

Hint No. 3

One good contact leads to another. Oftentimes, an initial contact will not lead to a writing job, but your contact knows someone else who might be interested. If your initial contact doesn't give you a referral, ask for one, and ask if you may use his or her name. One of my best jobs came from a contact I made with an advertising agency that didn't need free-lance writers at the time, but the creative director knew of another job in town. I made the second contact and got the consulting job, writing a slide presentation for a major utility. Previous to that job I had never written on the subject and, in fact, had never even written a slide presentation! But I demonstrated an eagerness to take on the job, and I had a good portfolio of other kinds of writing samples to show. A similar approach can work for you.

Hint No. 4

Vary your approaches to writing. Demonstrated versatility will take you into new writing jobs (as my experience with the first slide presentation proved).

Take on a new assignment—say, getting a feature article published in the local newspaper or journal—and go after it. Begin by reading the newspaper or journal to get a feel for its format and

approach. Be sure to contact the newspaper or journal before you begin, to learn what kinds of free-lance writing it accepts. Then pick a subject you'd like to investigate, write the article, and submit it for consideration. If it's accepted, you've got a published writing sample for your portfolio. If it's rejected, don't be discouraged. You've still got a writing sample that demonstrates your skills in a particular area.

Follow the same procedure for a press release. Your civic or professional organization is doing something the community would be interested in, for example. Write it up. A colleague in business or teaching is doing something worth writing about. Work up a feature article or special interest story for the local paper or in-house organ or the professional journal in that person's field.

Hint No. 5

Write about your own experiences. Take a trip? Write it up. Not every trip is worth writing about, but most trips provide some experience or activity worth sharing.

I, who had never set foot on a sailboat before, took a trip to the Bahamas once with three friends on a 30-foot sailboat. Every conceivable disaster short of bodily harm to us, but certainly not short of damage to the boat, occurred, so I turned my trip into an article entitled "The Sea, The Hobo [our boat], and Me." While I never had the article published, I did put it to good use in my portfolio.

The same holds true for job experiences. One summer I taught in an inner-city Head Start program: twenty-five 4-year olds and me with no formal training in pre-school education. It was quite an experience, and I recorded my thoughts in a journal/article I entitled "Kids, Kool-Aid, and Carol." Into the portfolio it went as further evidence of writing skills.

Another case in point. I have a colleague in academia who has, through the years, published numerous articles in scholarly journals, all without pay, of course. His avocation is sailing, and he and his wife recently took an extended sailing trip, after which she (who had never written before) wrote an article about bridge tenders, those people who raise and lower drawbridges. The article was immediately accepted for publication by a sailing magazine, and she was handsomely paid!

You've had experiences worth writing about. Put pen to paper, and then put the results in your portfolio. These will start to add

up. Over a period of time (and all in your spare time), you can collect writing samples that demonstrate your range and versatility, your writing dexterity, your "way with words." These you will market when you've gathered a sufficient sample.

Now, with portfolio in hand, you are prepared to meet the client: the small retail merchant who sends fliers about sales, the direct mail house that needs writers for its clients' catalogs, the large department store that sends direct mail pieces via a bank of free-lance writers, the business that wants to publicize a new development or service or to increase public awareness of its products.

The possibilities are endless. That's why you need evidence of your multi-faceted writing skills. Armed with the essential portfolio and a determination to explore the market's many paths, it won't be long before you're on the road to profitable writing.

How to Enter the Field of Specialized Writing for Nursing

Cathy M. Ceccio, *Barberton (Ohio) Citizens Hospital*

Joseph F. Ceccio, *University of Akron*

As educators who are actively involved in the field of specialized writing and organizational communication for nursing and allied health sciences, we recently wrote a letter to the editor of *The Journal of Business Communication* (volume 18, number 1, winter 1981, pages 57-58) in which we discussed the field of specialized writing for nursing as well as the rationale which will provide the "big market" for professional communication educators in adult nursing education. Our purpose here is to explain how teachers of business and technical communication can make a solid, professional contribution to this expanding arena of specialized writing. And we will get right to the point.

The following six strategies will help you enter the field of specialized writing for nursing.

1. Become familiar with the scope of written nursing communication. (See Exhibits 1 and 2.) And try to read one or two general nursing journals, such as *Nursing83*, *American Journal of Nursing*, or *Nursing and Health Care*, on a regular basis to give you a perspective on the current trends in nursing.

2. Learn the essentials of the nursing process, that is, the theoretical framework which underlies the entire domain of nursing. Since written client assessments, problem lists, care plans, teaching plans, and chart entries are all based on one or more components of the nursing process, it would be difficult to fully grasp the significance and process of written communication in nursing without understanding this basic framework. Ann Marriner's second edition of *The Nursing Process: A Scientific Approach to Nursing Care* (St. Louis: Mosby, 1979) gives an excellent overview of this important topic.

3. Strengthen your knowledge of your ability to write measurable behavioral (performance) objectives. Nursing places considerable emphasis on writing meaningful objectives which are then carefully incorporated into designing educational programs, teaching plans, and client care plans. Robert F. Mager's book,

Preparing Instructional Objectives (Palo Alto, CA: Fearon, 1975), will provide you either with a solid introduction to or a thorough review of behavioral objectives. And Dorothy E. Reilly's text, *Behavioral Objectives in Nursing: Evaluation of Learner Attainment* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1975), provides an overview of the teaching-learning process as a means of helping to integrate behavioral objectives into the field of professional nursing.

4. Learn about the nature, purpose, and types of documentation which nurses do when recording client information. Our textbook, *Effective Communication in Nursing: Theory and Practice* (New York: Wiley, 1982), includes a long second chapter on documentation (see Exhibit 1). Other sources of valuable information are *Problem-Oriented Nursing* by F. R. Woolley and others, *Professional Writing for Nurses in Education, Practice, and Research* by Philip C. Kolin and Janeen L. Kolin, and *Documenting Patient Care Responsibly*, a Nursing Skillbook by Intermed Communications, Inc.

Also consider attending a one- or two-day workshop for registered professional nurses on the essentials of effective documentation. The best workshops are usually given in a university's school of nursing/continuing education division.

5. Identify and assess the needs of your learning population *before* constructing a course proposal. Generic B.S.N. students may have different needs from those of R.N. degree-completion students. The former may need to focus on the essentials of good writing, with an emphasis on principles of documentation, teaching plans, and care studies. Experienced R.N.s, whether returning to school for a B.S.N. or for continuing education opportunities, may want to focus on those communication skills—letter writing, report and proposal writing, techniques of documenting performance—that they are likely to need in first-line supervisory positions.

Others in education or research may identify the need to complete a project worthy of submission for publication.

Once you have determined the learning needs of your population, you can more accurately determine the course's level. Then you should discuss the elements of the proposed course or workshop with interested faculty members from the school of nursing.

6. Consider team-teaching a writing course with a faculty member from the school of nursing. This is especially important if you determine that you have a population interested in writing and researching for publication.

In short, doing consulting work or teaching in the field of specialized writing for nursing is clearly not for everyone. But acting on the material provided here can help teachers of business and technical communication get started on making a significant contribution to this exciting field.

Exhibit 1

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN NURSING: THEORY AND PRACTICE

Joseph F. Ceccio and Cathy M. Ceccio
New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1982.

Table of Contents

(Note: Each chapter includes Objectives, Summary, Exercises, References, and Further Reading.)

CHAPTER 1	THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS IN NURSING INTERACTIONS Communication Situations Importance of Communication Purposes of Communication What Effective Communication Is Communication as a Process Communication Barriers Adaptation as the Gateway to Communication Communication Facilitators
CHAPTER 2	CLIENT-CENTERED DOCUMENTATION WITHIN THE NURSING PROCESS The Nursing Process Nursing Assessments Care Plans Teaching Plans Documentation Systems Discharge Summaries
CHAPTER 3	WRITING READABLE HEALTH INFORMATION FOR THE CLIENT Audience Analysis Readability Formulas

- Format Selection
- General Guidelines for Writing Health Education Materials
- Writing Clear Instructions and Readable Information
- Writing About Medications
- Writing Nurse-Client Contracts

- CHAPTER 4 DOCUMENTING WITHIN THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM
 - Committees, Agendas, and Minutes
 - Procedures and Procedure Manuals
 - Incident Reports
 - Memos

- CHAPTER 5 WRITING AND THE NURSE LEADER
 - Justification Reports
 - Proposals
 - Job Descriptions
 - Performance Appraisals
 - Letters of Appreciation, Praise, and Goodwill

- CHAPTER 6 COMMUNICATING THROUGH NONWRITTEN MODES
 - Report Conferences
 - Effective Listening
 - Nonverbal Communication

- CHAPTER 7 RESEARCHING AND WRITING FOR PUBLICATION
 - Writing Resources
 - Topic Selection
 - Literature Review
 - Journal Selection
 - Planning, Organizing, and Outlining
 - Writing, Rewriting, and Revising
 - Manuscript Preparation and the Editorial Process

- CHAPTER 8 COMMUNICATING ABOUT EMPLOYMENT IN THE PROFESSION
 - Self-Analysis
 - Market Analysis
 - Resumes
 - Application Letters
 - Employment Interviews
 - Follow-Up Messages

Exhibit 2

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION FOR PROFESSIONAL NURSES:
LIBRARY RESOURCES

GUIDEBOOK

Strauch, Katina P., and Dorothy J. Brundage. *Guide to Library Resources in Nursing*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1980.

The first section opens with a description of general reference works, followed by an annotated listing of books and references in the major areas of nursing. Periodicals most appropriate to each area are listed at the end of each part. The second section gives an introduction to the library, including detailed information on the methodology for conducting computerized library searches.

INDEXES

Cumulative Index to Nursing & Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), 1956-present.

Prior to 1977, this index was known as the *Cumulative Index to Nursing Literature*. There are five bimonthly issues yearly, with the annual bound volume appearing each March. CINAHL indexes over 200 English-language periodicals related to the fields of nursing, health education, and medical technology. To use CINAHL efficiently, consult the "yellow pages" subject heading listing in the back of each annual volume. References are entered under both subject and author headings.

Hospital Literature Index, 1945-present.

Nurses in management may benefit from this resource, an international subject-author index of English-language journals on health care administration.

International Nursing Index (INI), 1966-present.

This index compiles listings of articles from over 200 international nursing journals. INI features separate subject and author indexes, a yearly listing of nurses' doctoral dissertations, and foreign language articles at the end of each subject heading.

Nursing Studies Index, 1900-1959.

This retrospective, four-volume compilation of nursing literature was initiated under the direction of Virginia Henderson at Yale University. Extremely valuable for its historical approach to the development of clinical practice, nursing education, and nursing research, the *Nursing Studies Index* is the only index for the years 1900-1956.

PERIODICALS

General

American Journal of Nursing. Official journal of the American Nurses' Association; general articles of high quality; published monthly.

Nursing83. Wide variety of general-interest articles; excellent use of illustrations, graphs, and photographs; good readability; largest circulation of all nursing journals; published monthly.

Nursing Clinics of North America. Scholarly, well-written articles; published quarterly; each issue focuses on one or two major topics with several related articles on each of the topics.

RN. Wide variety of general-interest articles; popular among students; published monthly.

Specialty

Nurse Educator. Published bimonthly; articles on educational components and techniques in curriculum development and staff development.

Nursing Outlook. Published monthly by the National League for Nursing; excellent for reporting issues, trends, theoretical concepts; high editorial standards.

Nursing Research. Published bimonthly by the American Nurses' Association and the National League for Nursing; reports results of well-constructed nursing research.

Supervisor Nurse. Published monthly; essential for nurses in leadership and management positions; focuses on topics such as organizational communication, systems analysis, and managerial concepts.

Consulting Opportunities for Speech Communication Faculty

R. Wayne Pace, *Brigham Young University*

An oft quoted definition of consultants is that they are people who solve problems you did not know you had, in a way you cannot understand. The image conveyed by the term "consultant," nevertheless, is that of a qualified person from whom others can seek advice, counsel, information, or opinions about a problem they think they have. Many Speech Communication faculty have recently developed a strong interest in these consulting activities. At recent meetings of the Western Speech Communication Association, the Speech Communication Association, and other associations, one or more sectional meetings have been devoted to discussions of consulting in business and industry. Many faculty see consulting as a potentially lucrative adjunct to their university assignments.

The survey results reported here provide some general and tentative answers to four questions related to consulting opportunities for Speech Communication faculty. The questions concern the kinds of consulting activities in which Speech Communication faculty could expect to engage, the kinds of organizations in which they might find consulting opportunities, what they should do to secure consulting opportunities, and what advice working consultants give faculty members who would like to do consulting.

Opinions were sought from approximately 40 individuals who were known to be engaged in consulting activities. About half of those surveyed replied, but with incomplete questionnaires; thus, responses of 17 consultants are reported. Respondents were located in approximately 15 different states, from New Jersey to California and from Washington to Florida. The consultants were between 35 and 70 years of age, with consulting experience ranging from five to 40 years.

Responses consisted of short paragraphs describing the opinions of the consultants. The statements were analyzed by identifying themes, grouping the themes, and summarizing categories of responses. The results reveal many consistencies among the respondents and reflect trends that seem applicable on a fairly broad basis.

TYPES OF CONSULTING ACTIVITIES

The first question concerned the most likely types of consulting activities in which Speech Communication faculty could expect to engage. A large number of replying consultants suggested that specific consulting activities would depend upon the particular academic preparation of prospective consultants, and that preparation in speech alone was quite limiting; however, their responses seemed to suggest three general activities:

1. *Presenting seminars and workshops, handling training programs, and giving speeches on topics concerned with:*
 - a. Improving formal and informal public presentations and committee functioning
 - b. Decision-making
 - c. Organizational development
 - d. Interpersonal communication
 - e. Interviewing
 - f. Motivation
 - g. Executive leadership
 - h. Human relations
 - i. Managerial communication
 - j. Improving an organization's or an individual's public image
 - k. Public involvement in decision-making
 - l. Analyzing communication in organizations
 - m. Performance review procedures
 - n. Message design
 - o. Arbitration and mediation practices
 - p. Improving work groups and discussion behaviors
 - q. Influencing others to accept or refuse a proposal.
2. *Organizing speech programs, writing speeches, and coaching other speakers.*
3. *Designing and conducting analyses and evaluations of communication in organizations.*

In addition to suggesting that Speech Communication faculty appear to be viewed as having broad expertise, the list of topics can serve as a general check-list of subject-area specializations in which expertise should be developed if a person has ambitions of becoming a consultant.

ORGANIZATIONS MOST LIKELY TO USE CONSULTANTS

The second question concerned the kinds of organizations most likely to use the services of Speech Communication consultants. The sample of consultants mentioned both private and public organizations, but five broad categories of organizations seemed apparent:

1. *Agencies of the Federal Government*, including the Civil Service Commission, military and veterans administration, Department of Agriculture (such as the Forest Service), and Department of the Interior (such as the National Park Service).

2. *Departments of State Government*, including transportation and highway patrol, health and social services, water resources and environment, and engineering.

3. *Departments of Local Government*, including city police, fire and streets, and county agencies.

4. *Professional and Trade Groups*, such as dental associations (dentists, dental assistants, and dental technicians), medical associations (doctors, nurses and hospitals), legal associations (lawyers, public defenders), educational units (school districts, PTA), and labor unions (construction).

5. *Medium-Sized Businesses and Industries*, including district offices of large corporations, such as banks, retail and direct sales, utilities, restaurants, accounting, construction and manufacturing, and advertising and public relations firms.

Because these five categories probably represent organizations with which the respondents work, this list should not be interpreted as definitive; nevertheless, prospective consultants in Speech Communication may find these kinds of organizations most receptive to their services.

PREPARATION FOR CONSULTING

The third question concerned what a Speech Communication faculty member should do to secure consulting jobs. Five general themes seemed to emerge from the responses:

1. *Gain knowledge about and experience in business, industrial, and governmental organizations.*

2. *Gain knowledge about organizational behavior and management theory.*

3. *Develop a specialization within the field of communication.*

4. *Develop contacts in your local community* by affiliating with the American Society for Training and Development and with other associations that bring you into contact with those who hire consultants. Become active in your own community service, political, and social activities; accept speaking engagements and perform complimentary workshops for church, charitable, and other groups.

5. *Publish research in magazines and journals read by executives and training directors.*

The implication of these responses is that prospective consultant: must establish a reputation in their local communities and expose their ideas to those who contract for consultants. A prospective consultant needs a specialization, an understanding of business, industrial, and government organizations and community forums.

ADVICE FROM WORKING CONSULTANTS

The fourth question asked the consultants to provide advice for Speech Communication faculty who wish to become consultants. Again, five lines of thought seem to summarize most of the advice:

1. *Make a realistic assessment of your own motives for wanting to consult.* Do you want to consult just to make money, to gain prestige, to help others, to expand your own background, to improve your teaching, or to relieve your boredom with teaching? You may find that some activity other than consulting will allow you to reach your objectives more profitably and more directly.

2. *Consulting is hard work and often returns small monetary rewards.* Contrary to much popular belief, consulting for the large proportion of faculty members is tiring, time-consuming, and troublesome. One consultant advised: "You may want to get a good job so that you are not compelled to consult." Do consulting because you like that kind of activity, not because you feel you have to do it.

3. *Become well qualified in a specialty and develop instruments for use in consulting activities.* Then, find relationships between these instruments and your expertise and determine how you can save money for organizations. Successful and popular consultants have their own instruments for assessing the effectiveness of communication in organizations. A great part of the consultant's real expertise is the ability to devise instruments and to use them to evaluate communication problems.

4. *Keep up with what is happening in the kinds of organizations where you wish to consult.* Most consultants apparently tend to specialize not only in a content area but also in a type of organization. Some consultants work quite exclusively with government agencies, some with medium-sized businesses, and others with industries. Recommendation four suggests that consultants must keep abreast of developments that affect the kinds of organizations for whom they consult. One consultant observed, "keep learning and changing. . . if you can't do that while staying basically sound, you can't help others do it."

5. *Develop a presentational style that motivates others while communicating your ideas.* Much of a consultant's success lies in an ability to get ideas across and to motivate others in implementing them. As one of the consultants noted: "ease off on pedantic speaking; the ivory tower approach may impress some executives, but it is likely to turn off far more."

Overall, the responses indicate that consulting opportunities are out there somewhere, but, the difficulties and disappointments make the job less enchanting than one might like. The glamour comes from success. Nevertheless, as one sage observed: "for those who like this kind of activity, this is the kind of activity they will like."

Obtaining, Negotiating, and Pricing Your First Consulting Job

Peter B. Clarke. *Arcus Company (Chicago)*

Consulting is big business and it is growing rapidly. Upper management—whether in business, industry, government, foundations, health or any other sector—accepts consultants as useful, effective, and often economical essentials to successful operation. My experience has been that executives will welcome a consultant, once the consultant has convinced them of his or her competence. This is crucial. If you cannot build prospects' confidence in you, you stand little chance of turning them into clients. So how do you go about this?

First of all, point to your past accomplishments. If, as I suspect, you are teaching business communications in a college or university (95% of ABCA's members do), your experience may be only in teaching. In fact, you may have no business experience at all except for summer and part-time jobs while getting your education. Your first reaction to consulting, then, may be, "But all I've ever done is teach. I have no experience."

Wrong! Your teaching experience is a very valuable asset. In fact, it's probably your biggest asset, and will continue to be so even after you have successfully performed as a consultant.

Consider this. Most college students accept their teachers as authorities. (Even when a teacher has demonstrated something less than competence in his or her area of specialty, students are reluctant to really deny the value of the person's teaching.) I have met many people who have been out of college for 30 or more years, whose college training is now virtually all obsolete, but who hang on tenaciously to what they were taught, believing in its correctness even in the face of overwhelming evidence that it is no longer correct. I'll bet you have met such people too.

Well, that kind of thinking leads to a reverence for college teachers that establishes a firm foundation for people's belief in you as an authority. I think a college teacher who is currently teaching or who has taught for some time has an advantage that consultants even with successful consulting experience cannot match. What I am getting at is that you should waste no time on self-doubt. You have exactly what the world is looking for: you

can teach people to communicate successfully, effectively, and economically. If you can teach college students to turn out a good memo or letter, think how much better you can teach people out in the "real world" who are more mature and, most important, better motivated.

Which brings me to my next point. At the beginning, consult in your strongest area. Unless you have a strong background in management and organization, back off from communication audits, organizational communications analysis, and some of the other "high-powered" areas business communicators get into. Without a stronger than usual background, you may have a tough time establishing yourself sufficiently as an authority to get such consulting work. Besides, it takes a fairly large organization and one that is bureaucratically structured to really make use of, say, a communication audit. Everyone, including the big consulting firms, knows who the "Fortune 2000" are, and the competition is fierce. More about this later.

If your experience is pretty much limited to teaching letter and report writing, with maybe a course in organizational communication, I recommend you do exactly that for clients as a consultant. Such work can and does lead into other areas of consulting as clients get to know you and you learn about them. As a working teacher you have demonstrated your competence. And more pertinent, you have demonstrated that competence in an area where people urgently need help. This includes all organizations, from the one-man-with-a-secretary manufacturers' representative to the office with 100 people in it.

That's my next point: Your best prospects are small and medium-sized firms. The big companies and government bureaus are bombarded by consultants looking for work. (Can you imagine how many proposals come in to AT&T or IBM every day!) My own experience has demonstrated again and again that smaller organizations are by far the best prospects for business communication consulting.

First, small organizations do not generally attract the best college graduates. Thus their employees may need communications training more than those in a large firm, but the small firms may be less able to generate such help internally. Second, if you are not located in a big city, you are not cut off from consulting prospects. Every small and medium-sized town has firms that can use your services. Third, focusing your efforts on small organizations usually means you will have little or no competition from other

consultants. . . a big advantage when you're starting out, especially.

To sum up: The business is out there in the thousands and thousands of small organizations of all types, and you are qualified to go after it. (If you think you aren't needed, ask the next executive you meet if he or she wouldn't like subordinates to communicate more clearly and effectively. If you don't get a resounding "Yes!" I'll be very surprised.)

PLANNING TO BE A CONSULTANT

Since I believe most of you are presently teaching, and interested in consulting as a part-time activity, I will concentrate on this aspect. But first, one bit of advice if you are planning to go into consulting full-time. You must have a minimum of six months financial security assured before starting out. In other words, you must be able to cover all your living expenses and the expenses of being a consultant for at least six months. A year would be better. Remember that even if you find jobs right away, you probably won't receive fees for some time.

If you are now teaching, first clear with your school's administration. If your school has no policy about consulting, try to get one—in writing. If your dean questions whether consulting will interfere with your teaching, reply that of course your teaching will come first, and that you plan to have only a few selected clients. Point out that your consulting will make you a far more effective teacher, and will reflect favorably on the school's image as a servant to its community. (This last argument is especially effective with community colleges.) You might also hint that a side effect of your contacts with local organizations may very well be increased enrollment as people you work with become aware of the resources of your school. If your school wants you to publish, say that consulting will provide the base for publishable research.

Sit down and think through what you can do for an organization. If you are in the majority of ABCA's members, what you can do is to teach people to communicate better in speaking and writing. Or you may want to concentrate on either spoken or written communication. You will quite likely come to the conclusion that what you can most readily do is what you are already doing—teaching your specialty.

Fine! That's exactly what most firms need. That's the area where you will probably most easily find work. There's nothing

wrong with training seminars. They are effective for the client and profitable for you, and you can streamline your present courses to do them. If you have some other skills, perhaps you want to get into organizational communications, great. What I have to say below will still apply.

In any case, establish exactly what you want to do as a consultant and how you want to go about it. You must have a clear idea of this before you approach prospective clients. Not only will this enable you to focus your sales pitch, it will give you the confidence of knowing your objectives and how to achieve them. Remember that looking for consulting work is just like looking for a job. No one will hire you unless you can tell them exactly what you can do for them.

GETTING READY TO CONSULT

First, decide on a name for your business. Companies like to deal with other companies, and a company name indicates a little more stature than a personal name does. You could use "The Joan Smith Company," incorporating your own name, but a less personal name is better: "Arrow Consultants," "JS Associates," or the like.

Second, get yourself a good tax accountant. You will get into depreciation, business expenses, capitalization and other tax areas where you may not have much expertise. Putting yourself in the hands of a knowledgeable accountant will pay you in the future. In fact, a good accountant is usually worth more to you than any fee you pay.

To begin, start right now keeping track of expenses you incur in starting up your consulting business. First on the list you might put the cost of this book and the postage you spent to order it. This qualifies as a "Technical Book" and is a deductible expense if you go into consulting. If not, it may be a deductible expense as a "tool" for your job of teaching. In any case, list everything you spend until your accountant advises you what is and is not deductible.

Third, order yourself some good printed stationery. Take the advice you give your students: The appearance of stationery is like the clothes we wear—it makes that important first impression. So go to a printer for your letterheads and envelopes. Make this a commercial printer, not an "Instant Press" operation. You want

quality work, and it won't cost any more to have a regular printer do it. It may cost less.

For the time being, just get letterheads, second sheets, and No. 10 envelopes. Have your printer supply second sheets (unprinted paper) from the same stock as your letterheads so that they will match. (You would be surprised how many printers overlook this.) Later, as you become busy, you can add specially printed report paper, invoices, and so on. You will need business cards, too, but they can wait unless your printer offers you a good deal on printing stationery and business cards together.

Fourth, consider hiring an answering service to answer your phone when you're not there. There is something unprofessional about your seven-year-old answering what a prospective client thinks is your business phone! Having an answering service is something a good businessperson does, and it should be part of your business and professional image. By the way, many answering services will also function as a mail drop, giving you a business address. This is sometimes useful, but if you are actively teaching, your school address is acceptable. And you may want to use your home address if, as I am going to suggest, you set up an office at home and write it off as a business expense (ask your accountant whether your local IRS office considers the home office mailing address a legitimate determinant—it varies from IRS office to IRS office).

Fifth, get a separate business telephone. There are several reasons for this. You don't want your clients to compete with your family and your friends to get through on your personal phone. With a business phone you get a free Yellow Page listing (free advertising is free advertising!). Moreover, a business phone is important for tax purposes in establishing your business as a real one. Incidentally, the telephone company usually charges more to install a business phone than a personal phone. You can save money by ordering a second personal phone, and the day after it's installed converting it to a business phone. Conversion is a lot cheaper!

Sixth, set up an office at home. Under current tax rules, an office at home is a legitimate expense only if your activities require it and your business (usually an employer) does not furnish one. As a consultant you should have no problem qualifying your home office as a legitimate expense, since your office at school is for a different activity, and you can easily prove it to be an unsuitable place at which to conduct business. (Your school

will probably be happy to write you a letter saying you can't use your school office for personal business!)

Keep your workplace and home separated as much as possible. This will make it easier for you to work and also will help in figuring what percentage of your house's expenses are deductible as a business expense. A separate room is the best arrangement. Otherwise, set a portion of a room aside strictly for business. You may want to take some photographs of your office in case the IRS questions your deduction. Ask your accountant about this. Remember to keep track of all your expenses in setting up your office at home. If you use furniture and, say, a typewriter you already own, these constitute part of your investment in your business and are handled in a certain way for accounting purposes.

KEEPING CURRENT

Regardless of what area of business, government, or industry you expect to work in, subscribe to *The Wall Street Journal*. The *Journal* is simply indispensable. It is the prime source of information about what is going on in business and the economy. Your clients will undoubtedly read it, and my opinion is that you cannot afford *not* to read it too. You will find it enormously useful, and the subscription is a deductible expense.

If you contemplate consulting with the Federal Government, you might want to look at the *Commerce Business Daily*, found in all Federal Deposit Libraries and most other large libraries. It is the Federal Government's purchasing newspaper and lists all government contracts issued for \$25,000 or more. It is thus a good source of information about what companies may be gearing up to handle government work and so may need someone to help train new employees. However, the *Commerce Business Daily* is well known, and all your competitors will read it, too. *The Congressional Record* and *Federal Register* can point you to companies that must comply with new or additional government regulations, and especially those which must file compliance reports. They might need professional writing help.

Regularly read your local newspaper for information about what firms in your area are doing. This is your best source for local information, and it's usually information your competitors from other areas won't have.

FINDING WORK

Here, in order of effectiveness, are ways to find consulting work.

1. Lecture: You need to get attention from your local business community, and the best way is to get up and speak. You should realize that the biggest problem most civic organizations and associations have is finding programs for regularly scheduled meetings. I guarantee that if you approach your local Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis, or whatever club, and offer to speak to the group for free, you will be welcomed enthusiastically. A Rotary or Chamber of Commerce luncheon is absolutely tailor-made for you: almost 100 percent prospects, and they'll be in a receptive mood after eating!

What do you talk to them about? A sure-fire subject is "Can Employees Be Taught to Communicate/Write/Speak Better?" Of course the answer is yes, and your little talk should broadly describe how you do it. Don't be afraid to do a little soft selling in a talk like this; everyone who talks to civic groups and business associations is selling something.

You can find local groups through your Chamber of Commerce (which is also a prospect). Beyond your own bailiwick there are literally thousands of trade, business, and professional organizations that need speakers for meetings. You can find a mailing list in "National Trade and Professional Associations of the United States and Canada." Write and offer to speak for free (but they should expect to cover your basic expenses).

Lecturing is the quickest and most efficient way to bring yourself to the attention of prospects. It should be your primary sales tool.

2. Publish: Writing an article that prospective clients will read is an excellent way to sell yourself. The best media for you are the innumerable trade magazines, association and professional periodicals, and company house organs. Just about all of them can use articles on how to write/speak better or how to get employees to write/speak better.

Standard Rate and Data Service publishes a monthly directory of trade and business publications. You can find *SRDS* in most larger libraries and school libraries, and in all advertising agencies. Make up a mailing list of magazines (only one per category) and send a prospectus for an article, describing what you would say and why the publication's readers would be interested in it. You

should expect to get paid for your article, but if a magazine replies that they will run your article but can't pay you, don't turn them down. Remember that you are after exposure.

Company and other organization internal magazines and newsletters are great places to publish. While each publication gets you in front of only one client, you can be assured that the people in the organization who count will read your piece. There is a business communicators' association that can provide a mailing list.

By the way, would your local newspaper (especially if it's a small one) be interested in a series of articles by you? Especially if you give them to the paper for free?

3. Write Letters: People who write letters to editors get attention. So write letters to the editors of trade magazines and journals commenting knowledgeably on something that appeared in the latest issue. Easier said than done, perhaps, but this is a useful technique for attracting favorable attention.

4. Get Listed: Many associations publish directories in which you can be listed as a consultant for little or no cost. Finding them may be time-consuming, but such listings are inexpensive and sometimes productive.

5. Direct Mail (or Direct Marketing as its practitioners prefer to call it): At first thought, direct mail may seem the obvious way to drum up business. Besides, aren't you in the writing business anyway? Well, while direct mail may give you a chance to show off your skills, the odds it will produce consulting work for you are disturbingly low. The sheer volume of mail any organization gets offering consulting and/or training help is staggering.

While writing this article I counted the number of pieces of mail I received in six days offering me training, seminars, consulting help, and the like. The total was 38! And I have a very small and obscure company! It seems that direct mail is everybody's favorite way to contact businesses and other organizations. Your effort is pretty likely to get lost in the deluge of "junk mail," and never get past the mailroom or the president's secretary.

6. Advertising: As an ex-advertising man I have a hard time admitting that there are occasions when advertising doesn't pay. Selling consulting is one of them. You might try a dignified notice (as a professional, all that is allowable and effective) in your local newspaper or in some selected trade publications, but the response is unlikely to be worthwhile.

7. Cold Calls: Knocking on doors (especially "cold," without an appointment) may be better than sitting around the house watching

television. . . but not much. You can put your time to better use sending articles to publications or drumming up speaking engagements.

YOUR SALES PACKAGE

Make up a brochure. Not a resume, a brochure. Work up a four-page folder (11" x 17" folded to 8½" x 11") with some quick synopses of what you've done for other clients. These do not necessarily have to have been consulting jobs—successful teaching is just as good. Follow with a brief summary of your education, jobs you've had, awards you've earned, testimonials, and so on. Use illustrations, especially a picture or pictures of you doing your thing. Don't waste space on a "bust" or "head" shot—show yourself lecturing to a group or working with people.

Have your printer set your copy in type or print it out on a machine that can justify the right margin. Have your brochure printed on glossy paper and, if you can afford it, in color. Don't be too economical with this—it's your showpiece.

PRICING YOUR WORK

The toughest problem beginning consultants face is setting prices for their work. From what little I know about this area, most fail to charge enough. While you may be concerned that too high a price will "scare off" a client, consider these two points. First, the price you quote will do much to define the quality of your work. No one wants cheap work, and most prospective clients are willing to pay well if you can assure them they will get more than their money's worth. Second, full-time consultants, and particularly consulting organizations, have more overhead than you do, and have to set their prices high to cover their costs of doing business. What may appear to you to be a high price is likely to seem reasonable to a client, especially since it will be a deductible business expense.

Here, then, is a formula for roughly figuring what you should charge: Annual salary you would receive if you worked full time (or annual salary you would like to receive for working full time) plus 65 percent of that for overhead plus 10 percent of the resulting sum for profit (after all, you're going into consulting to make a

profit, aren't you?) divided by the number of days a year you can actually work.

As an example, suppose your annual desirable salary is \$28,000.

Salary	\$28,000
Overhead (65 percent).....	18,200
Subtotal	46,200
Profit (10 percent)	4,620
Subtotal	50,820
Divided by workdays per year.....	.200
Daily fee you should charge	\$254

That is, remember, only a rough guide. Actually, most consultants charge a good deal more than \$250 a day. Also, bear in mind that whatever fee you set, your expenses are additional. That includes travel (even if you drive your own car), lodging, meals, and all incidental expenses. This is the customary way of doing things.

Training seminars, the most common consulting in our area, are harder to price. First, you have to take into account the status of your students. You should charge more to train vice presidents than you would to work with assistant department heads. Second, consider that three kinds of work are involved in training: instruction, personal conferences, and analysis. To handle the three categories you will just about have to charge by the hour, and that means different hourly charges for each kind of activity.

I don't think you should charge less than \$50.00 per hour per student for instruction and conference time. Some people get \$200.00 an hour, but I consider that pretty high. You are going to have to balance the number of students, their status, your relationship with the client, whether you will come back in the future to do more training, etc. Remember that it is always better to come in too high than too low. If the prospect chokes on your first quote, you can always come down during the negotiations, but you can never raise your bid once you've made it.

Try for \$50.00 per hour per student for instruction and conferences, and \$30.00 per hour for analysis (reading, grading, commenting on and otherwise going over students' writing). If you are going to handle seminars of more than five students at a time, you can come down on the per-hour instruction charge to compensate, but make the charge higher for individual conference time.

The usual sequence of events is preliminary meeting with the

client, negotiation of fees, contract, planning and analysis based on company writing samples, individual conferences with students to define each one's problems, seminars alternated with analysis and personal conferences, final analysis, final report to management. None of this should come free. In fact, before your very first meeting with a prospective client, ask if they will pay you for the meeting. It is customary for companies to do so, and even if they balk, you haven't lost anything—you can still have the preliminary meeting for no charge.

As you might suspect, the preliminary meeting with a prospect sets the tone for all the subsequent work you will do for that organization. As a firm rule, never deal with anyone but the person at the top. Without the president's (or at least vice president's) blessing, you will not likely get the cooperation or respect you need to do a good job.

Suppose you agree that the usual two 2-hour training sessions per week will suit a prospect's needs. You will want these on company time, not employees' personal time (which they will resent). Further, you will want to hold your sessions at the end of the days (3 p.m. to 5 p.m.), and preferably on Mondays and Tuesdays. . NEVER on Fridays! Moreover, to make best use of your time, you'll want to hold personal conferences in the two or three hours before each session to minimize the number of trips you will have to make to the client each week. These are things only the top dog can decide on in most organizations.

Without the president's specific backing, you will be fair game for every underling who thinks he or she can make an impression on management by showing how bad you are by sabotaging your efforts. Life (and your working time) is too short for such politicking; better to head it off beforehand.

LETTER OR CONTRACT?

Whether you sign a letter of intent with a client or enter into a formal contract really doesn't make that much difference—except to the lawyers. What is important is that you and the client clearly and specifically spell out what each will do and how you will be paid for your work and when. If you feel you should have a contract or if a prospect wants you to come up with one, sit down and in clear language write everything you think should be in it. Then and only then should you go to a lawyer to have your

contract put into legalese and to determine what additional points need to be covered.

Don't be disturbed if the client wants his own lawyer to look over your contract, and it takes three weeks. Lawyers don't live in the same time continuum as the rest of us. If the client organization comes up with its own contract, don't be upset. Just read it very carefully and have your lawyer look it over. You may very well discover some clauses that should be in your contract!

Finally, never begin work before the contract or letter of intent is signed. No reputable organization should expect you to, and if one does, you had better back off and take another look at the situation.

Consultants and clients enter into essentially six kinds of agreements.

First, and most desirable, is the Fixed Price Agreement. You quote an overall total price for the job, and both you and the client know where you stand. However, you must be able to estimate things closely enough to make money on the job without pricing yourself out of it.

Second, and next most desirable, is the Fixed-Fee-Plus-Costs Agreement. This is the way to go for a job that entails external costs (wordprocessing, duplicating, paper, etc.) that you cannot reasonably estimate. Negotiate this type of agreement if you are going to produce policy manuals or procedures or the like for a client.

Third, and usual for training work, is the Daily/Hourly Rate Agreement. This kind of agreement protects you when you don't know how much time a job will take (such as analysis time as opposed to training time).

Fourth, and not very desirable, is a Cost-Plus-Incentive Agreement. This is fine if you are sure you can get results, but how do you measure the often intangible results we produce in our work?

Fifth, and to be avoided like a typhoid carrier, is a Performance Agreement. In one of these you don't get your fee until you have finished the job to the client's satisfaction. But how do you measure when you have improved a client's communications satisfactorily? And who defines satisfactorily? Performance Agreements almost always wind up in acrimony, and I think they are favored by organizations that do not intend from the beginning to pay for work done.

Finally, we come to the retainer. Nothing beats being on retainer! You get your annual retainer plus your regular hourly or

per-job fee for work done. Being on retainer usually means steady consulting work with a client, and is wonderfully uplifting for the spirit. I hope you are fortunate enough to find a client who will put you on retainer.

And that, roughly, is how you obtain, negotiate, and price your first consulting job. This article does not, of course, cover every situation and problem you will encounter—no article or even book can do that. But if you put the suggestions given above into practice, you will have a good chance of getting and keeping consulting work.

Needs Assessment and Communication Auditing

The so-called "communication breakdown" has for years been something of a scapegoat for people whose favorite project has failed or for those who are wrestling with an apparently insurmountable problem. The communication consultant, however, must be wary when called on to troubleshoot perceived communication breakdowns, for many people misapprehend their own dilemmas. This section offers advice on ways to proceed with objective analyses of perceived communication problems.

Basically three stages should be worked through carefully in auditing an organization's communication. "Interviewing and Auditing Procedures for In-House Communication Seminars" takes up what is usually the first stage: the client interview. What to expect, how to behave, what questions to ask—these are explained in detail. Attention is given to defining the critical power, that person who is ultimately responsible for the group's communication. Without the blessings and cooperation of the critical power, communication consulting is doomed from the start.

The second stage is a needs analysis or survey of the client. At this stage information may be obtained from communication diaries, logs, observations, and so on; but often one of the most important instruments in needs analysis is the audit questionnaire, used to discover the client's perceived strengths, weaknesses, and needs. William Rothwell's "Assessing Attitudes About Organizational Communication" presents an attitude inventory that assesses affective (feeling-based) considerations in preparation for behavioral intervention. Rothwell's questionnaire covers writing, speaking, and interpersonal communication.

Steven Golen and Thomas Inman in "A Questionnaire to Determine Barriers to Effective Communication" also present a broad-scope survey to detect communication barriers that arise from attitudes, skills, personalities, and intelligence in human relationships. Both the Rothwell and the Golen/Inman questionnaires are useful determinants of attitudinal barriers in the full range of human communication. In "Business Report Writing Competencies" Golen and Inman change the focus somewhat and offer an instrument that collects data on the types and topics of business reports (written and oral) for management. Another means to determine topics for an in-house program is suggested by John Hatfield and Richard Huseman in "The Job Incumbent Survey: An Approach to Identifying Communication Training Needs." Their technique compares skill importance and skill competence, thereby giving the consultant a good idea of the areas most in need of training.

The final stage in needs assessment for written communication is the close scrutiny of documents actually produced by the client. To undertake this analysis well, the consultant must be familiar with the principles of written business communication. While it is beyond the scope of this book to examine these principles in depth, countless textbooks and research studies carefully

explain the most effective strategies and applications. Also, many of the articles in this book reflect these principles inherently in training seminars and in other consulting activities (see PROGRAM DELIVERIES).

Trainers and consultants in written communication must be familiar with all three aspects of needs assessment so that programs devised for clients will be tailored to fit the organization and its unique communication climate.

Interviewing and Auditing Procedures for In-House Communication Seminars*

William J. Buchholz, *Bentley College*

Any business communication instructor who desires to experience realistic business problems might consider doing some kind of consulting work. No textbook, scholarly article, or course can present reality in quite the same way that actual field experience can. And consulting is one way to get that experience. Consulting is a baptism of fire that tempers our theories and burns off the haze of some of our more abstruse concepts. It is a means of subjecting the wisdom of the classroom and textbook to the only test that really counts in our profession: business world reality.

How does one set about preparing for the first consulting job? The process is sometimes bewildering, especially if the newcomer has no one to turn to for advice. The purpose of this article, therefore, is to suggest some approaches that might help you, with the least aggravation possible, to plan your first in-house writing seminar. This article will not tell you how to locate prospective clients, but it will tell you the first steps to take after you get a lead on your prospect. The information here is based primarily upon my own experience and upon advice that I have gathered preparing for various consulting jobs.

To begin, let us assume that you already have a prospective client and that you are now ready to start planning a writing course for the company. The first stage of your relationship with the client consists of two phases: phase 1 is the pre-interview or initial phone contact; phase 2 is the interview. The interview is the more vital of the two phases, but you should not underestimate the importance of the initial phone contact. If phase 1 is treated in a casual, offhand manner, phase 2 may never come to pass.

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INITIAL PHONE CONTACT

The initial phone contact does basically two things. It introduces you to the prospective client, and it allows you to find out some very necessary information about the client's company. Be prepared to give the prospect your credentials. The client may want to know about your experience in business communication, in writing, and in teaching; some clients may ask about your philosophy of communication—that is, are you basically conservative and subdued in your outlook, or are you flashy and imaginative? How much technical experience, if any, do you have in engineering, chemistry, biology, or whatever their specialty may be? Do you know anything about writing reports, proposals, setting up specifications, tables, graphics, etc.?

The list goes on. But as a rule, much of this kind of questioning will be saved for the interview itself; however, you will want to assess your abilities and be ready for any questions that may relate to your professional competence. Above all, don't be put off by any of these specific questions. Remember, you do not have to be a computer expert to teach computer programmers how to communicate effectively—and all astute managers realize that people gifted both in writing and in their company's specific technology are rare. Be prepared to emphasize that your particular expertise can be applied virtually anywhere.

As soon as possible, turn the phone interview toward your client. Find out everything you can about the company, especially the group with whom you will be consulting. What products or services do they handle? Who are their clients? Approximately how much of their communication is external or internal? You don't have to ask too much at this point; just try to get a general idea of what they do and for whom. The majority of specific information you will get in the actual interview itself. In fact, you may wish to inform them that you will be sending a questionnaire that probes more deeply into the nature of their communication. Before ending the phone interview, however, be sure to get the exact location of their office, and set up an interview day and time.

INTERVIEW

The successful interview serves two important purposes: (1) it

introduces you to your client, giving you an opportunity to demonstrate both your humanity and your professionalism, and (2) it affords you the opportunity to elicit information for your proposed seminar. Keep in mind also that the interview is essentially a job interview. The only difference between this and a permanent job interview is the understanding that they will employ you for just a few weeks or months. In other words, all the usual rules of job interviewing apply here: dress well and talk well; create the best impression you can. Like any job interview, then, this one too is a courtship. They will be looking you over and you will be looking them over. If both parties are happy, marriage (to continue the metaphor) will ensue. Thus the first important thing to be accomplished in this interview is that you introduce yourself as a human being. Let's look at this introduction from the client's point of view.

Bob Johnson is in trouble. He manages twenty men and women who are all extremely proficient in their specialties, but not one of them writes very well, and some could even be considered functional illiterates. Their writing is obscure or pedantic, illogical, sometimes misleading, and nearly always imprecise. These problems are something more than stylistic niceties; they are critical communication breakdowns—so critical that one very important client refused a report because it was unreadable. Another client had taken red pen and actually corrected one of their reports.

Needless to say, upper management has pressured Mr. Johnson to get his house in order. He's tried. Now every report prepared for a client must first go through him. Yet, while Johnson is a capable writer himself, he does not have the time or ability to teach his people how to write effectively. Besides, he is being paid a substantial salary to manage his group, not to proofread and edit their work. He is desperate. He needs professional help, so he has come to you.

The Human Level

What kind of professional are you? How will his people react to you? Can you really help them, or are you one of those consultants with ready-made solutions for every problem you see? Even worse, are you just another "English" teacher, fussing over obscure grammar rules that no one really cares about, much less understands? For a moment, then, let's examine the dark side of our professional image as it may appear to these people.

Keep in mind that Mr. Johnson's group is made up of highly trained professionals. All have their Bachelor's degrees, a few have Master's, and some even have Ph.D.'s. One thing they all have in common is this: they cannot write well. This can mean only one thing for you—they probably hated their English composition classes. Since they most likely have had only bad experiences in English, and are now having bad experiences in their day-to-day writing, you have to assure them that you will give them something different, something practically related to their professional needs.

The last thing these people need to feel is that Miss Stonebreaker, their 7th grade English teacher, has risen, once more to rage against them with her knuckle-slapping ruler and cold, intimidating stares. The schoolmarm image of the English teacher is alive and well; and it is one you will want to overcome at the outset.

How? Just act human, compassionate, sincere, and professional. Sound like a reasonable person who realizes this group has problems, and, like any good doctor, you are ready to set about healing them as best you can. Listen to them. Show a sense of humor. Greet them during and after the interview as one human being to another. By all means, if you can, have lunch with them. (It is always reassuring for most people to see that "grammarians" have lunch just like other human beings.) Get the feel of the group and function accordingly—make them feel comfortable with you. You don't have to chomp a cigar and swill straight bourbon doubles while you tell raunchy stories, but do give the impression, at least, that if they behave this way, it doesn't bother you one bit. You don't want to become a hypocrite in such situations, but neither will it do to wear your values on your sleeve.

You will also want to find out how they actually feel about their writing, and you. Just ask Mr. Johnson. You have every right to know whether his group is hostile to the idea of a writing seminar or whether they have come to see the urgency of their communication problems. Indeed, you should emphasize early that writing cannot be forced on anyone who does not wish to learn. You will want to dispel any illusions Mr. Johnson and his group may have about your seminar being a panacea.

Be straightforward with Mr. Johnson. Tell him you have achieved fine results with some people in your classes, but also caution him that not everyone develops writing skills in a single course. You can assure him of at least this one thing, I believe: if his people are willing to attend every session, if they pay attention to the comments you make on their writing, if they genuinely work every

day at reinforcing the skills you teach every week, and if they truly desire to be careful, concise communicators, then you can do them some good. I don't think you can overemphasize the importance of their need to be motivated. And, indeed, you can point out that many times people who at first may seem lackadaisical about the course do become motivated as time passes. I have seen groups get so involved they become as helpfully critical of each other's work as any teacher. The seminar raises their level of awareness; they become more sensitive to rough style, poor grammar, disorganization, etc., and tend to eliminate each other's bad habits while enforcing the good—but only because of high motivation.

The human level, then, is extremely important in the first interview. You should impress them with your desire to be of service. But desire is not enough. What Mr. Johnson will also want to hear is *how* you can help. To help him in a practical, substantial way, you will need to know a great deal about what his group does. You will have to analyze their problems and indicate whether you think you can help. Proceed in this by conducting a communication audit: question them specifically about their work and examine representative selections of their writing. You can do the first in the interview; the second, you will have to do later.

Information Gathering

One of the most crucial things you have to do in this early stage is to determine the company's specific needs. To get these specifics, you could ask questions like those in Figure 1. This list is by no means exhaustive, but it gives you an idea of what you might ask. Question 11 might be one you *should* include, however. No matter what kind of responses you get on questions 1-10, you may well find that most of the writing problems in number 11 will be checked off. What you might do to get a sense of priorities is have your client number the problems in question 11 in order of importance. Then you will know, for example, that if punctuation and grammar appear at the top of the list, you will have to devote a few hours to covering the basics.

The most efficient way to use your questionnaire is to submit it at least a week before the interview. That way your client will be able to canvas the group to find out what they feel they need; and if you give them enough time, you may get carefully thought out responses.

THE AUDIT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Who are your clients? Government? Regulatory agencies? Private industry? Retailers? Wholesalers? Others?
2. What needs do your clients have? What basic communication formats do you use to fulfill their needs?
3. Do you have a company manual for written communications?
4. Are your letters and memos largely informational?
5. Do you write many persuasive letters (e.g., to the public, clients, government licensing boards, etc.) In other words, do you sometimes have to *sell* your product/service?
6. Do you have to deal with many negative situations? If so, what kinds most generally?
7. Do you write lengthy reports (5 or more pages)? Are these reports primarily for internal distribution or are they for clients?
8. Do you write proposals or requests for proposals?
9. Do you work with technical description, definition, process explanation, or instruction writing?
10. How much defensive writing do you prepare? (Defensive writing, basically, is writing that, for purposes of eventual litigation, cannot be *too* specific.)
11. What would you say are the greatest weak spots in your writing?
 - a) Organization
 - b) Logic
 - c) Beginnings/endings
 - d) Emphasis
 - e) Clarity
 - f) Punctuation
 - g) Grammar
 - h) Sentence construction
12. What other needs do you feel you have?

FIGURE 1

As early as possible, try to determine who the critical power is and what he or she wants. The critical power is the person ultimately responsible for the group's communication. In our hypothetical instance, it is apparently Mr. Johnson. You may find, however, that Mr. Johnson is being carefully watched by his immediate superior, who has some very definite ideas to which Mr. Johnson must conform. In other words, Johnson's boss, Ms. Hardy, clears all the group's work before it passes to higher levels in the company. Therefore, she is the critical power in this

instance. If Ms. Hardy is not pleased with the way you will be training the group, you will be wasting your time and causing yourself a great deal of trouble.

Let us suppose for a moment that you wish to teach Mr. Johnson's group how to improve their style. You've determined they are needlessly stuffy and verbose; their writing is indirect, passive, and obscure. To correct these faults, you introduce the basic concepts of "you attitude," "informal tone," "active voice," and "direct" writing. Now, of course, these are radical departures from the group's previous writing. But you, Mr. Johnson, and all the acknowledged business communication authorities agree that these changes improve the group's writing style.

The only problem is this: what you see as concise and effectively spare prose style, Ms. Hardy sees as abrupt and clipped. What you applaud as more direct and reader-oriented, Ms. Hardy sees as informally nonprofessional. All the jargon and technical pedantry you've worked so hard to eliminate are exactly what Ms. Hardy sees as professional and technical expertise in writing. In essence, Ms. Hardy is horrified with what you've done to Johnson's people; to her they don't sound professional anymore. She is afraid her superiors will be as unhappy as she is and therefore decides that before any more harm is done, you must go.

The problem here is a simple but very common one. A higher authority, the critical power, has not been properly apprised of what you propose to do. Here is a classic instance of the need to educate management. If you hope to serve your client well and achieve results with which the company will be pleased, you must make sure the critical power knows basically what changes you plan to make.

Early, then—before you begin the course—you can deal with any objections or misconceptions management may have. You can adjust your material to conform to the critical power's conception of what is good for the company—and you can also attempt to persuade the critical power to make any conceptual adjustments that you as a professional have determined must be made. If, unhappily, you and the critical power cannot find a common ground, you may have to forego serving them. It is indeed disappointing to have to "give up" a prospect who you sincerely believe needs your help, but, of course, if management will not be happy with your services, you may ultimately work more harm than good.

The Writing Analysis

Assuming, however, that you do convince management you are working in the company's best interest and the client does wish to proceed, then you must become acquainted with their writing as soon as possible. Be sure to examine any correspondence and report manuals or directives the company may be using for guidelines. Knowledge of these will give you solid footing for the course.

Just as important, perhaps more so, are samples of the group's writing. Ask your client to gather representative samples of the memos, letters, and various reports from each person who will be taking your course. Also, have your client indicate which memos are acceptable and unacceptable. This is one way you can get another slant on what the client feels is important; you will get some indication of the client's writing skills, prejudices, and desires. These writing samples also give you a chance to locate the poorest writers before the seminar starts. You can then home in on them, arranging time for extra sessions if necessary. And, if you have some samples of good writing early in the course, you can immediately show the poorer writers what they should aim for.

Finally, a sizable representative sample of the group's work will acquaint you firsthand with the company's standard formats, the nature of their clients, the horizontal and vertical distribution of internal correspondence, and the company's technical jargon.

CONCLUSION

After you have met your client, asked your questions, and studied your samples, you most likely will have a solid basis for your seminar. If you find, however, that you need to ask more questions, arrange for another interview. Or if you want to get a more immediate grasp of the situation, interview some of the key people who will be attending your course. You may also decide you would like to observe the office routine informally, to get a clearer picture of the internal paper flow.

When you are finally satisfied with your research of the organization, you are then ready to map the course, prepare the proposal, and await management's decision. (For price guidelines, proposal preparation, a sample proposal, and letter of transmission, see William Buchholz, "The First Consulting Job: Price, Proposal, and Marriage," *The ABCA Bulletin*, December 1978, pp. 1-6.)

If you've been thorough in this first stage of consulting, you will find very few, if any, unpleasant surprises as the course progresses. In addition, you will impress your client as being a very hardworking and forthright person. The company will see that you know what you are doing, that you plan your moves carefully, and, most importantly, that you are giving them individual service. Take the time to perform a good interview and analysis. These may be the two most persuasive elements you will have to convince management that you would be a good investment of their time and money.

Remember: the goal of any good training course is to help people in an organization write efficiently and effectively in the way management desires. A careful communication audit will prepare you well to achieve this goal.

Writing Effectiveness: A Survey of Attitudes, Needs, and Desires

William J. Buchholz, *Bentley College*

One very important basic tool for assessing an organization's written communication needs is a Writing Effectiveness Survey, designed to probe client awareness of writing problems. As part of the initial phase of the communication audit, the Writing Effectiveness Survey is intended to go hand in hand with two other important probes: (1) the client interview and (2) the analysis of client writing. All three analytical modes are used to guide design of the communication program ultimately to be proposed.

The following Effectiveness Survey is not intended to be the final word on analysis; rather, it is a convenient, easily administered questionnaire that provides information useful in designing seminars and consultations for homogeneous groups of managers, engineers, scientists, and technicians in various industries. With a bit of reworking here and there, the questionnaire can be used in other kinds of organizations as well.

WRITING EFFECTIVENESS QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is designed to help me determine your attitude toward your writing. Using this survey and various samples of your writing, I will design a technical writing workshop series that will reflect your needs and desires. All responses are confidential.

Directions: Place a check or an x in the appropriate box to the right of each statement. Please insert your completed questionnaire in the envelope provided.

	ALMOST ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOME TIMES	ALMOST NEVER
1. Writing is a pleasant experience for me	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. The first paragraph of a letter is the hardest to write.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. I am sensitive to my reader's needs	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. When I start to write, a blank page scares me . . .	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. The last paragraph of a letter is the hardest to write	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. I feel genuinely good about my writing	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. My vocabulary is adequate	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. I write to people below my technical level	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. My writing is wordy.	☐	☐	☐	☐

	ALMOST ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOME- TIMES	ALMOST NEVER
10. I can clearly explain a technical process	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. It takes me a long time to organize my writing . . .	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. I am insecure about my writing	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. I use visual aids (charts, tables, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. My sentence structures are varied	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. I use strong and active verbs	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. When I write directions, they are effective	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. My paragraphs flow logically	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. I have enough time to do my writing.	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. My writing style is interesting	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. I emphasize main points well	☐	☐	☐	☐
21. Reader comprehension is uppermost in my mind. .	☐	☐	☐	☐
22. I carefully proofread my own work.	☐	☐	☐	☐
23. My writing is as good as I can make it	☐	☐	☐	☐
24. I can give bad news without alienating my reader .	☐	☐	☐	☐
25. I know the best ways to define difficult terms. . .	☐	☐	☐	☐
26. My writing is in a rut	☐	☐	☐	☐
27. I can deliver information persuasively	☐	☐	☐	☐
28. My descriptions of things are clear	☐	☐	☐	☐
29. I rewrite nearly everything at least once.	☐	☐	☐	☐
30. I write well under pressure	☐	☐	☐	☐

I am satisfied with my writing and do not really want or need to attend the technical writing workshops. Yes ☐ No ☐

I want to become a better writer and would be willing to devote a couple of hours a week outside the workshop time to writing assignments, especially in the following areas: Yes ☐ No ☐

PLEASE NUMBER ACCORDING TO PREFERENCE

Technical description	Sentence structures
Process explanation	Paragraph structures
Direction giving	Negative situations
Memo and letter strategies	Editing and proofreading
Grammar/punctuation/usage	Vocabulary expansion
Formal oral presentation	Writing under pressure

Though the survey appears to be a list of randomly generated questions, it is in fact carefully designed to query five basic areas:

1. GENERAL WRITING ATTITUDES: Questions 1, 4, 6, 12, 23, and 26.

2. SENSITIVITY TO AUDIENCE: Questions 3, 8, 21, and 24.
3. GENERAL WRITING COMPETENCE: Questions 7, 9, 14, 15, 17, and 19.
4. ORGANIZATIONAL ABILITIES: Questions 2, 5, 10, 11, 13, 16, 20, 25, 27, and 28.
5. EDITING: Questions 18, 22, 29, 30.

Note that category 4, ORGANIZATIONAL ABILITIES, contains one third of the questions. Category 4 predominates because many writers in management have great difficulty in organizing their writing, especially in adjusting their material to audience needs. The survey instrument is therefore weighted specifically to identify organizational rough spots. The final section of the questionnaire, preference ordering, then gives the respondent an opportunity to check the desired strategies that would most effectively eliminate organizational and other writing problems.

This final preference section is a good indicator of the client's perceived needs and desires. Enough room is provided for respondents to pencil in areas that the questionnaire might not cover. Because the respondent signs the survey, the consultant can use this information during client interviews to set up a program tightly fitted to the client's immediate needs. This questionnaire, however, is but a small part of the needs assessment phase, for many times the perceived needs are not the actual needs. Thus the interview should be used to explore trouble spots suggested by the questionnaire. Finally, rigorous analysis of the organization's communications will substantiate many of client-perceived writing problems.

One final word about attitude. People who refuse to learn good writing techniques cannot be taught them. If clients are not highly motivated to grapple honestly with whatever solutions are proposed, all the consultant's best wisdom and earnest activity will be futile—hence, the yes and no blanks after the preference section of the questionnaire. These two sentences form a kind of contract: the respondent indicates attitude at this point. If the group shows little or no desire to work with a consultant, the organization's contact person should be notified before the consultant undertakes to work communication miracles—for it would be a miracle indeed to improve the communication of clients who have no intention of heeding advice.

Assessing Attitudes about Organizational Communications

William J. Rothwell, *Special Services Officer, Illinois Office of the Auditor General*

The Communication Audit—like financial, compliance, management, and program audits—is essentially a comparison between “what is” and “what should be.” A descriptive Communication Audit concentrates on collecting information on “what is” to serve as a guide for future efforts to move the organization closer to “what should be.” A prescriptive (or process) Communication Audit, on the other hand, is a behavioral intervention which attempts within the audit context to make “what is” coincide with “what should be.” In either case, it is essential to measure the attitudes of organizational members about communication processes.

The importance of affective (feeling-based) considerations makes the Communication Audit utterly unlike other audit forms, which usually stress cognitive (knowledge-based) considerations. But feelings and attitudes are quite difficult to measure because they are internalized. It is still widely debated whether attitudes cause behaviors or whether behaviors cause attitudes. If the former is true, then the measurement of attitudes is crucial to the success of a behavioral intervention.

We can attempt to measure employee attitudes about organizational communication processes through interviews, diaries, structured observation, and other methods. However, questionnaires are easily administered to large groups, and their findings easily lend themselves to statistical comparisons. They can provide a still picture of communication processes and attitudes. Paired with diaries and routing logs, which attempt to provide a sample of dynamic communication processes, questionnaires are the balance sheet and diaries are the income statements of the Communication Audit.

The questionnaire which follows is a sample of one that has been used in assessing the “what is” of organizational communication processes prior to a behavioral intervention. While not perfect, it is a starting point for others who desire a picture of communication attitudes in an organization.

ATTITUDE INVENTORY ABOUT ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS

Directions: Please fill out the blanks in Section I based on your own best estimates. In Section II, *circle* each response using the following scale:

- SA Strongly Agree
A Agree
N No feeling one way or the other
D Disagree
SD Strongly Disagree

SECTION I

1. My job title is _____
2. My division is _____
3. I supervise _____ employees.
4. I write about _____ letters per week.
5. I receive about _____ letters per week.
6. About _____% of the letters I receive are sent from outside the organization.
7. About _____% of the letters I send are directed outside the organization.
8. I write about _____ memos per week.
9. I receive about _____ memos per week.
10. About _____% of the memos I receive are sent from outside the organization.
11. About _____% of the memos I send are directed outside the organization.
12. I write about _____ reports per year.
13. I receive about _____ reports per year.
14. I participate in about _____ meetings per year.
15. I make about _____ phone calls per day.
16. About _____% of my phone calls are directed to people within my own organization.
17. I estimate that I talk or write to higher management about _____ times each week.
18. I estimate that I talk or write to my subordinates about _____ times each week.

SECTION II

1. In this organization, it is easiest to communicate with those who are my equals in the hierarchy. SA A N D SD
2. I frequently talk with my supervisors. SA A N D SD

- | | | | | | |
|--|----|---|---|---|----|
| 3. I frequently write to higher ups in the organization. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 4. In general, I do not look forward to writing to others in the organization. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 5. In general, I do not look forward to writing to those outside the organization. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 6. I find myself putting off writing tasks. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 7. I find myself postponing meetings. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 8. I find myself postponing informal discussions with my organizational equals. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 9. When I write or speak to my superiors, I try to "tell it like it is." | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 10. Writing and speaking are, to me at least, two different languages. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 11. Knowledge of grammar is directly related to good writing. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 12. I prefer a phone call or a visit to writing. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 13. I communicate more with superiors than with subordinates. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 14. I communicate more with employees located geographically closer to me than with those who are some distance from my work site. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 15. I enjoy communicating with superiors. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 16. I enjoy communicating with my equals in the organization. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 17. I enjoy communicating with subordinates or with those whose positions are lower than mine. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 18. It is easier to work with others on writing projects than to work alone. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 19. When I speak or write to others in the organization, I am often aware of the "unspoken" or "implied" parts of my message. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 20. When I receive messages from others in the organization, I frequently get the feeling that there is more to the message than just the literal meaning. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 21. When I receive a poorly written message, I lose respect for the individual who wrote it. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 22. When I send messages to superiors, I frequently try to phrase problems in dramatic, exaggerated terms. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 23. I notice that many people in our organization deliver written messages by hand and then talk about them. | SA | A | N | D | SD |

- | | | | | | |
|--|----|---|---|---|----|
| 24. I find it easier to talk freely away from my work location. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 25. I believe that an individual's role in an organization places certain restrictions on how he or she phrases messages and on how often he or she sends messages outside the organization. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 26. It is not grammar or the skills of communication that are important. Rather, it is the political maneuvering that makes or breaks a message's effectiveness. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 27. From my experience, I believe that subordinates most frequently talk with superiors in order to get favors rather than to get instructions. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 28. Employees in my organization frequently complain or gossip about others behind their backs. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 29. We frequently have meetings or informal discussions in our work group to air grievances or to discuss problems. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 30. I believe that communication in my work group is about as good as I can imagine it could possibly be. | SA | A | N | D | SD |

Please make any other comments you wish.

A Questionnaire to Determine Barriers to Effective Communication

Steven Golen, *Louisiana State University*

Thomas Inman, *Arizona State University*

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine which specific barriers to effective communication are perceived as most serious in an organization. The questionnaire can be used to gather information regarding the most serious communication barriers perceived by organizational personnel in any number of relationships. For example, an organization may want to identify what communication barriers are more serious when managers communicate with other managers, or when subordinates communicate with subordinates.

Once these specific barriers are identified, then the organization can use these barriers, and the ways to deal with them, as topics for discussion in training classes and/or in-service workshops. An important point to remember is that a linkage exists between the identification of barriers by organizational personnel and the behavior designed to overcome or minimize the effect of these communication barriers in the organization.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The questionnaire is divided into three parts. The first part consists of a general introduction to the questionnaire and the instructions for its completion. The second part deals with a list of potential barriers to effective communication in a Likert-type scale format for a specific type of relationship.

The last part contains general classification questions. The responses to these questions can be used for any cross checks or comparisons within the organization. For example, do males perceive the barriers as more serious than do females?

If the responses are tabulated manually, the questionnaire administrator or workshop leader can calculate the means for each barrier and determine the composite ranking. However, if a computer is available, a one-way analysis of variance can also be used.

ILLUSTRATION

The questionnaire that follows is designed to determine the seriousness of the communication barriers between an accountant and a client in a public accounting firm.

SERIOUSNESS OF BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

This questionnaire was developed to determine what the most serious barriers are to effective communication in the ACCOUNTANT-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP.

A barrier is an element that may inhibit the free flow of information between two or more people.

This questionnaire is not a test; therefore, there are no right or wrong answers. What is wanted are YOUR PERCEPTIONS of the seriousness of potential barriers to effective communication in the ACCOUNTANT-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP. That is, based on your experience, if these barriers were to occur, how serious would they be?

Instructions:

1. On the line to the right of each of the potential barriers listed on the following pages, please CHECK the number on the continuum that corresponds to the seriousness of that barrier in your ACCOUNTANT-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP.

A one (1) signifies "NOT SERIOUS" while a five (5) signifies "VERY SERIOUS." If you believe that certain barriers are not present in your relationship with a client, CHECK a zero (0) which signifies "DOES NOT APPLY." For example:

	NOT SERIOUS					VERY SERIOUS	DOES NOT APPLY
	1	2	3	4	5	0	
"Barrier"	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

2. Please complete the brief information sheet following the questionnaire. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

ACCOUNTANT-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP

Please indicate the seriousness of the following potential barriers to effective communication based on the ACCOUNTANT-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP. PLEASE CHECK YOUR RESPONSE.

	Not Serious				Very Serious	Does Not Apply
POTENTIAL BARRIERS	1	2	3	4	5	0
The client's						
1. Know-it-all attitude	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Resistance to change	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Lack of credibility	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Fear of distortion or omission of information	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Lack of understanding of technical accounting jargon	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Inadequate common accounting knowledge (exclusive of technical jargon)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Speaking too loudly	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Poor organization of ideas	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Differences in perception	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Prejudice or bias	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
11. Poor timing of the message	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
12. Inappropriate physical appearance	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
13. Overly competitive attitude	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
14. Defensiveness	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
15. Emotional reactions	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
16. Lack of interest in the subject matter	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
17. Inability to understand nonverbal communication (such as gestures, facial expressions, etc.)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
18. Use of profanity	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
19. Personality conflicts	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
20. Informal social groups or cliques	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
21. Hostile attitude	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

- | | | | | | |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 22. Poor spatial arrangements (e.g., desks, office partitions, etc.) | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 23. Prematurely jumping to conclusions | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 24. Physical distance between sender and receiver of information | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 25. Lack of feedback | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 26. Tendency not to listen | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 27. Having too many intermediate receivers between the sender and intended receiver of information | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 28. Either-or thinking (i.e., something is either black or white and has no shades of gray) | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 29. Physical noise and distractions | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 30. Overload or too much information | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 31. Status or position | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 32. Lack of trust | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 33. Other (please identify) | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

INFORMATION SHEET

1. Please check your age category: ☐ 21-30; ☐ 31-40; ☐ 41-50; ☐ 51-60; ☐ Over 60.
2. Sex: ☐ Male; ☐ Female.
3. Please check your current department: ☐ Auditing; ☐ Tax; ☐ Management Advisory Services; ☐ Other (please identify) _____.
4. How many years have you worked in public accounting? ☐ Less than a year; ☐ 1-5; ☐ 6-10; ☐ 11-15; ☐ 16-20; ☐ 21-25; ☐ 26-30; ☐ 31-35; ☐ 36 and over.
5. Are you a CPA? ☐ Yes; ☐ No.
6. Please check highest degree attained: ☐ High school; ☐ Associate's; ☐ Bachelor's; ☐ Master's; ☐ Doctorate (including J.D.)
7. Have you taken a collegiate course(s) in communication? (For example, business communications, interpersonal communications, or a similar course.) ☐ Yes; ☐ No.
8. Have you taken a noncredit course(s) in communications? ☐ Yes; ☐ No.
9. In what state did you receive your undergraduate degree? _____
10. What was your undergraduate grade-point average (GPA) based on a 4-point system (i.e., 4.0 = A; 3.0 = B, etc.) _____
11. Were you a member of any social or fraternal organization? ☐ Yes; ☐ No.

Business Report Writing Competencies

Thomas Inman, *Arizona State University*

Steven Golen, *Louisiana State University*

Business report writing skill has been identified as one of the essential areas for leadership success in the business world of the 1980s. Many corporations, in recognition of this need, are requiring their employees, including top executives, to attend report writing seminars in order to improve their writing skills.

This instrument has been used to collect data on the types of business reports which managers are required to write and on the topics that should be emphasized in report writing programs. The resulting data would be useful in planning programs in business report writing.

To reflect representativeness, users of this questionnaire should exercise care to assure that responses are received from managers at various levels of leadership responsibility as well as from different types and sizes of business firms.

Instructions: Please answer all of the questions which follow as they relate to your present assignment and responsibility.

BUSINESS REPORT WRITING COMPETENCIES

1. To what extent have you written or dictated business reports? (Note: Business Report is used here to refer to written presentations of factual information which provide data for business purposes and does not include routine letters or office memoranda.)

- ☐ a. Very frequently (almost daily)
- ☐ b. Frequently (almost weekly)
- ☐ c. Occasionally (once or twice a month)
- ☐ d. Seldom (once or twice every 3-6 months)
- ☐ e. Rarely (once a year)
- ☐ f. Never

2. To what extent are you required to make oral presentations as a part of your business reports?

- ☐ a. Very frequently (almost daily)
- ☐ b. Frequently (almost weekly)

- _____ c. Occasionally (once or twice a month)
- _____ d. Seldom (once or twice every 3-6 months)
- _____ e. Rarely (once a year)
- _____ f. Never

3. Of the reports which you write, how often are they directed to personnel *within* your company?

- _____ a. Very frequently (almost daily)
- _____ b. Frequently (almost weekly)
- _____ c. Occasionally (once or twice a month)
- _____ d. Seldom (once or twice every 3-6 months)
- _____ e. Rarely (once a year)
- _____ f. Never

4. Of the reports which you write, how often are they written to personnel *outside* your company?

- _____ a. Very frequently (almost daily)
- _____ b. Frequently (almost weekly)
- _____ c. Occasionally (once or twice a month)
- _____ d. Seldom (once or twice every 3-6 months)
- _____ e. Rarely (once a year)
- _____ f. Never

Directions: Below are listed a number of items typically emphasized in business report writing courses. Please circle each response to indicate the emphasis which you believe should be given to the teaching of each topic, using the following scale:

- C Comprehensive
- SD Some Details
- LD Limited Details
- IN Incidental
- NT No Treatment

5. Importance of reports in business and industry

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|----|----|----|----|
| a. Definition of a report | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| b. Role of reports in business | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| c. Qualifications of report writers | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| d. Reports for a particular audience (audience analysis, audience adaptation) | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| e. Other _____ | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |

6. Techniques of collecting data

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|----|----|----|----|
| a. Use of primary sources: questionnaires, interviews, observation, company records, experimentation | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
|--|---|----|----|----|----|

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|----|----|----|----|
| b. Use of secondary sources: library, indexes, etc. | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| c. Use of government sources: consensus reports, etc. | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| d. Other _____ | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| 7. Planning and organizing the report | | | | | |
| a. Overall patterns of organization | | | | | |
| (1) psychological (direct or deductive) | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| (2) logical (indirect or deductive) | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| (3) chronological | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| b. Outlining | | | | | |
| (1) types of outlines | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| (2) outline form | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| c. Titles and Headings | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| d. Other _____ | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| 8. Writing: Style | | | | | |
| a. Simple language: short sentences; short familiar words | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| b. Jargon and technical language | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| c. Objectivity | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| d. Conciseness and brevity | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| e. Adaptation to the reader | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| f. Readability | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| g. Sentence structure | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| h. Clarity | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| i. Concreteness | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| j. Other _____ | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| 9. Writing: Mechanics | | | | | |
| a. Grammar | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| b. Punctuation | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| c. Spelling | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| d. Use of Numbers | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| e. Abbreviation | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| f. Capitalization | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| g. Other _____ | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| 10. Graphic Aids | | | | | |
| a. Use of charts | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| b. Use of tables | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| c. Other graphics: pictures, diagrams, etc. | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| d. Other _____ | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |

11. Report types: Form
- | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|----|----|----|----|
| a. Letter reports | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| b. Memorandum reports | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| c. Long, formal reports | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| d. Other _____ | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
12. Report types: Function
- | | | | | | |
|---|---|----|----|----|----|
| a. Informational reports—(present facts, no analyses or conclusions) | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| b. Examination reports—(present facts, analyses, and interpretations—no conclusions or recommendations) | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| c. Analytical reports—(present facts, analyses, interpretations, conclusions and recommendations) | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| d. Progress reports—(patterns of progression present) | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| e. Describing a process—(present situation) | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| f. Writing for publication—(articles, press releases, etc.) | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| g. Other _____ | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
13. Oral reports and presentations
- | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|----|----|----|----|
| a. Techniques of presentation | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| b. Use of graphics | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |
| c. Other _____ | C | SD | LD | IN | NT |

PERSONAL INFORMATION SHEET

Please complete the following questions which will help us understand your background more fully and your present assignment.

1. Please check your age category: [] 21-30; [] 31-40; [] 41-50; [] 51-60; [] Over 60.
2. Sex: [] male; [] female.
3. Please check your organizational area: [] accounting; [] finance; [] marketing; [] production; [] personnel; [] data processing; other _____.
4. What is your current title? _____.
- 4a. At which level of management are you presently assigned? [] first line supervisor; [] middle management; [] upper management; other _____.
5. How many years have you worked in your current position (or for current employer or in the general area)? [] Less than 1 year; [] 1-5; [] 6-10; [] 11-15; [] 16-20; [] 21-25; [] 26-30; [] 31-35; [] 36 and over.

6. How many people do you supervise (or report directly to you)? ☐ 1-10;
☐ 11-20; ☐ 21-30; ☐ 31-40; ☐ 41-50; ☐ 51 and over.
7. Please check education degree attained: ☐ High school; ☐ Associate's;
☐ Bachelor's; ☐ Master's; ☐ Doctorate.
8. Have you completed a collegiate course in business report writing?
☐ yes; ☐ no.
9. Have you completed a noncredit course in business report writing?
☐ yes; ☐ no.
10. Does your company offer in-service training in report writing? ☐ yes;
☐ no.
11. If you answer "no" to question 10, do you believe your company
should offer an in-service course in report writing? ☐ yes; ☐ no.
12. Do you believe a collegiate business report writing course should be:
☐ a required course; ☐ an elective course; ☐ no opinion.

The Job Incumbent Survey: An Approach to Identifying Communication Training Needs

John Hatfield and Richard Huseman, *University of Georgia*

According to a 1979 estimate, American industry spends more than \$150 million annually on training activities.¹ A large part of this money is paid to outside consultants. One BNA survey revealed that 60 percent of firms questioned hired training instructors from outside the company (69 percent of that number from education institutions). Survey respondents also indicated that management development, including human relations and communication, was the instructional area where outsiders were most commonly used.²

Communication consultants who serve as trainers can choose from a vast array of topics for their sessions: written communication, interviewing, small group conference leadership, nonverbal communication, superior-subordinate communication, and so on. Quite often, the client organization gives little or no guidance concerning program content. A felt need for improving communication exists, and the consultant is responsible for determining training needs. And even when the client specifies the program content, many training and development experts argue that unless potential program participants help identify these needs, the program content might inadvertently be directed toward skills already possessed by participants or skills irrelevant to participant's jobs.³

The purpose of this article is to describe (1) a technique which can contribute to a communication consultant's (or in-house training specialist's) training needs analysis, and (2) the application of this technique to determine communication training needs in fourteen organizations.

COMMUNICATION TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS

Techniques for determining training needs abound. They range from what McGehee and Thayer call "armchair cerebration"⁴ to sophisticated procedures for identifying not only training goals, but also individuals who most need training.⁵ In this discussion we will assume that the general training need—communication—has

been established, and that those needing training (typically supervisory or managerial personnel) have also been identified. The task is then to determine what communication topics should be included in program content.

One useful technique for completing this task is the two dimensional job incumbent survey. Its purpose is to identify (1) communication skills job incumbents think are important in their jobs, and (2) their current level of competence in each skill. Assessing the dimensions of importance and competence simultaneously is critical. Knowing only that a communication skill is important to job performance gives no indication of how well incumbents can use the skill. And assessing only skill competence gives no information about the relevance of the skill to incumbents' work.

Survey Construction and Administration

The job incumbent survey is only part of the overall training needs analysis. It is developed using a variety of sources. For example, upper and middle managers can often provide insights about their subordinates' communication and performance problems. Existing performance appraisal systems, if they include specific communication skills (e.g., writing) as rating criteria, can be examined. Formal job analysis can identify the communication requirements (e.g., selling, leading meetings) of different jobs. Labor management data (e.g., grievances, suggestions, disciplinary actions) can be reviewed to isolate communication problems. Using these and other sources as well,⁶ the needs analyst forms a list of communication skills to be assessed.

These skills are presented in a survey format like that shown in Figure 1. Respondents are instructed first to rate the importance of each skill (by circling appropriate letters) for anyone performing their job. Then they are asked to assess their own level in each skill. Individual responses can be translated to a five-point numerical scale, and comparisons between skill importance and skill competence can be drawn for entire groups, subgroups, or even individuals. Typically, the communication skill most in need of training is that showing simultaneously the highest importance and the lowest skill level.

	Importance of Skill to My Present Job					My Present Skill Level				
	Unimportant	Seldom Needed	Occasionally Needed	Important	Crucial	Low	Moderately Low	Moderate	Moderately High	High
1. Managing conflict with subordinates	U	SN	ON	I	C	L	ML	M	MH	H
2. Appraising employees	U	SN	ON	I	C	L	ML	M	MH	H
3. Writing letters, reports, and memos	U	SN	ON	I	C	L	ML	M	MH	H
4. Leading meetings	U	SN	ON	I	C	L	ML	M	MH	H

FIGURE 1
SAMPLE INCUMBENT SURVEY FORMAT

APPLICATION OF THE JOB INCUMBENT SURVEY

To date, the job incumbent survey has been used as part of the communication training needs analysis in fourteen organizations. The remainder of this article will report the results of these applications. The data have implications not only for communication training programs within organizations, but also for business and organization communication course content in colleges and universities.

Survey Respondents and Administration

Of the 14 firms participating in the communication training needs analysis, six can be generally classified as manufacturing organizations (e.g., textiles, furniture, farm equipment); the remaining eight are service organizations (e.g., financial, broadcasting, wholesale).

The job incumbent survey was completed by 406 managerial

personnel in these organizations. Of the 406 respondents, 343 were male and 63 were female. Almost half ($N=183$) had been with their respective firms for more than ten years, although 40 percent of respondents had held managerial positions for fewer than five years. Seventy percent of respondents were age 35 or younger.

With input from higher management, we drew up a list of communication skills deemed important in various respondents' jobs. Not all firms chose to assess the same skills. Thus, the N 's reported below will not be identical for each skill. The job incumbent survey was administered to respondents on company time. Results were tabulated and reported back to management.

Survey Results

To save space and protect the anonymity of participating firms, we will present only the overall results of the surveys and break them down into manufacturing versus service organizations. In application, there were often marked differences in results across firms.

Table 1 contains a rank-ordered listing of mean ratings (on a 5-point scale) for the 14 communication skills included in the survey. Also shown are the results of one-sample t -tests for differences in perceived importance versus perceived competence in each skill. As the data show, handling subordinates' complaints was perceived to be the most important skill. However, its mean is based upon only 69 responses. The t -test revealed significant differences ($p < .001$) between respondents' perceived importance and perceived competence. Thus, formal and informal grievance interviewing skills are good candidates for training program content, at least for 69 of the 406 respondents. Several general conclusions can be drawn from the Table 1 data.

First, respondents show the greatest need for training in oral, two-party interaction (skills 1 through 5).

Second, written communication (skill 6) is important, given both the break between its mean rating and the rating for skill 7 and the t -test results.

Third, conflict management skills (7, 8, and 11) show moderate importance, and t -test results confirm that respondents do need training in these skills.

Fourth, counseling (skills 9 and 10) is also of moderately relative importance, although respondents think they are already equipped to handle employees' personal problems.

TABLE 1
MEAN RATINGS OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS
WITH RESULTS OF ONE-SAMPLE *t*-TESTS

	N	Skill Imp.	Skill Level	t
1. Handling subordinates' complaints	69	4.45	3.62	9.04***
2. Handling customer or client complaints	128	4.43	3.90	6.37***
3. Influencing others	69	4.38	3.56	7.85***
4. Appraising employees	406	4.13	3.78	7.84***
5. Handling discipline	406	3.88	3.49	6.98***
6. Writing letters, reports, and memos	406	3.82	3.44	7.29***
7. Managing conflict with co-workers	406	3.67	3.47	3.88***
8. Managing conflict with subordinates	406	3.67	3.50	3.06**
9. Career counseling	406	3.63	3.20	8.98***
10. Counseling employees with personal problems	406	3.46	3.48	- .22
11. Managing conflict with superiors	406	3.45	3.24	3.56***
12. Selling	80	3.39	3.15	1.88
13. Leading meetings	406	3.39	3.19	3.71***
14. Giving oral presentations to groups	406	3.30	3.21	1.63

p* < .05*p* < .01****p* < .001

Finally, small group conference leadership and public speaking (skills 13 and 14) show relatively low importance. Whether these skills should be included in program content is questionable.

The data in Table 2 reflect some interesting differences between manufacturing and service organization managers. They also show how the needs analyst can break overall data into subgroups for specific comparisons. In Table 2 the communication skills are listed according to their overall ranking in Table 1. "Rank," then, shows how each skill was ranked in importance by each subgroup of managers.

The most significant difference between manufacturing and service managers is their ratings of selling (skill 12). While manufacturing managers rated the skill as highly important and showed a training need, service managers perceived selling to be of low

TABLE 2
MEAN RATINGS BY TYPE OF FIRM OF COMMUNICATION
SKILLS WITH RESULTS OF ONE-SAMPLE *t*-TESTS

	Manufacturing Managers					Service Managers				
	Rank	N	Skill Imp.	Skill Level	<i>t</i>	Rank	N	Skill Imp.	Skill Level	<i>t</i>
1. Handling subordinates' complaints . . . 1		49	4.51	3.84	6.81***	2	20	4.30	3.05	6.83***
2. Handling customer or client com- plaints. 3		80	4.36	3.78	5.33***	1	48	4.54	4.10	3.47**
3. Influencing others 2		49	4.51	3.70	6.66***	4	20	4.05	3.20	4.07***
4. Appraising employees. 4		220	4.13	3.80	5.43***	3	186	4.12	3.76	5.71***
5. Handling discipline 5		220	4.03	3.52	7.15***	6	186	3.70	3.45	2.88**
6. Writing letters, reports, and memos. . . 7		220	3.81	3.38	6.50***	5	186	3.82	3.51	3.84***
7. Managing conflict with co-workers . . . 9		220	3.75	3.40	5.11***	8	186	3.58	3.55	-.45
8. Managing conflict with subordinates . . 8		220	3.79	3.47	4.51***	9	186	3.53	3.52	.06
9. Career counseling 10		220	3.60	3.16	6.57***	7	186	3.67	3.24	6.11***
10. Counseling employees with personal problems 12		220	3.54	3.42	1.89	10	186	3.36	3.55	-2.03*
11. Managing conflict with superiors . . . 11		220	3.56	3.17	5.28***	11	186	3.31	3.33	-.01
12. Selling. 6		32	3.91	3.13	4.25***	14	48	3.04	3.17	-.83
13. Leading meetings. 13		220	3.49	3.17	4.40***	12	186	3.28	3.21	.83
14. Giving oral presentations to groups . . 14		220	3.37	3.17	2.74**	13	186	3.23	3.25	-.29

p* .05, *p* .01, ****p* .001

importance and felt themselves to be adequately equipped with this skill.

Except for selling skills, the manufacturing managers' perceptions fairly closely matched the overall survey results. The service managers, however, clearly rated handling customer or client complaints as most important, with ample need for training. They reported little need for conflict management, conference leadership, selling, or public speaking training. Service managers also perceived themselves to have significantly better ($p < .05$) personal counseling skills than their jobs demanded.

Interpreting Survey Results

Just as the survey is constructed with help from various sources, so also should other sources (e.g., interviews with respondents and higher management, labor-management data) be used in interpreting its results. Using the results of a job incumbent survey as the only basis for decisions about training program content assumes that respondents are able to diagnose their own training needs and are willing to admit that they may have communication problems.

Assuming, for example, that the results reported above are from one organization, the needs analyst might take several approaches to confirming them. First, respondents might be interviewed to determine what specific kinds of subordinate complaints (skill 1) they hear. Records of grievances (their number and subject) can often be obtained from company files. Higher management can usually give insights into the problem. In terms of appraising employees (skill 4), the company's formal appraisal system can be evaluated. If changes are needed, they can be included in program content. If not, then perhaps respondents simply need sharpening of their appraisal interviewing skills. Confirming survey results, then, is an important follow-up to survey administration.

The needs analyst can also deal in two other ways with rater bias (in this case, over-inflated self-ratings of competence). First, presenting skill importance and skill competence items on separate survey pages, with one list of skills randomly ordered, will reduce the risk of respondents' making item-by-item comparisons of their sets of answers. Second, checking the dispersions of skill competence responses can detect positively skewed self-perceptions. In fact, the ratings reported here showed positive skewness. However, the t-test confirmed too many importance-competence differences to create significant concern about rater bias.

SUMMARY

This article has described the construction and administration of the job incumbent survey to assess communication training needs in industry. As one part of a training needs analysis system, the survey involves job holders in identifying their own training needs. By assessing both skill importance and skill competence at the same time, the survey helps ensure that training program content is likewise relevant and timely.

The results of survey applications reported here, of course, reflect some of the communication training needs organizations currently have. But they also document the need for broader based content in business and organizational communication curricula. The results point to a need to expand traditional business writing curricula to include the variety of oral communication problems survey respondents identified. They also give clear justification for orally focused courses to begin including units on written communication as well.

NOTES

1. William McGehee, "Training Development Theory, Policies, and Practices," in *ASPA Handbook of Personnel and Industrial Relations*, ed. Dale Yoder and Herbert G. Heneman (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of National Affairs, 1979), p. 4-5.

2. Bureau of National Affairs, *Training Employees*, Personnel Policies Forum Survey 88, November, 1969, pp. 3-4.

3. See, for example, Richard Morano, "Determining Organizational Training Needs," *Personnel Psychology*, 26 (1973), 479-487; and Fred Wessman, "Determining the Training Needs of Managers," *Personnel Journal*, 54 (February, 1975), 109-113, 125.

4. William McGehee and P. W. Thayer, *Training in Business and Industry* (New York: John Wiley and Sons), 1961.

5. For an excellent recent review of the training needs analysis literature, see Michael L. Moore and Philip Dutton, "Training Needs Analysis: Review and Critique," *Academy of Management Review*, 3 (1978), 532-545.

6. For a variety of needs analysis techniques, see McGehee and Thayer, and Richard B. Johnson, "Determining Training Needs," in *Training and Development Handbook*, ed. Robert L. Craig and Lester R. Bittel (New York: McGraw-Hill), 1967, pp. 16-33.

Common Problems: From Strategies to Ethics

It would take volumes to explore all the problems that can occur in communications consulting. This section is designed therefore to shed light on four of the darker areas. "Dissolving the Granite Complex," for example, exposes one of the problems writing consultants find to be very widespread: writing anxiety. This article offers ways to probe the client's attitude about self, the reader, and data. A schema is presented to offer various ways to release writers bound by psychological paralysis, the actual fear of writing.

In "Training Public Administrators to Communicate: A Policy/Behavior Approach," Hindy Schachter is concerned with the way rigid technique-centered approaches to training and consulting have perpetuated rather than diminished bureaucratic "miscommunication." Schachter's "policy/behavior" alternative offers concrete steps to encourage development of effective managerial communication skills by recognizing the uniqueness of public sector communication problems. Especially important is the idea of integrating decision making with communication in a political system to produce appropriate behaviors.

Ways of gearing behavior to an audience in technical rather than political environs is the subject of Jessie Stephen's "Helping Engineers Prepare Training Material for Nontechnical Audiences." Focusing on the reader's knowledge, vocabulary, and motivation, Stephens suggests ways to persuade engineers to examine their assumptions about audience. The causal relationship between ethics and motivation that Stephens suggests is expanded in the final article of this section.

Ethical behavior in consulting relationships has long been a knotty problem. In "Ethical and Political Issues in Communication Consulting," Larry Smeltzer reviews some of the potentially explosive situations embedded in the consultant/client relationship. Topics explored in this relationship, partitioned into 22 separate steps, include consulting skills assessment, the initial consultant/client relationship, choosing and implementing strategies, and the termination of the consulting relationship. While this article does not claim to set up absolute political/ethical guidelines, Smeltzer does go a long way toward clarifying the issues that, if not handled properly, can result in damaged reputations, business losses, and even legal action.

Dissolving the Granite Complex

William J. Buchholz, *Bentley College*

For many people one of the most terrifying experiences in life is sitting down to a blank piece of paper. Before they get up again, they want that blank page full of facts, thoughts, opinions—all perfectly expressed. These writers, if they can get words to come at all, are almost compulsively driven by a need to put the words down flawlessly the first time. They behave as though they are hammering their words everlastingly into granite: the first word they find, the first sentence they cast, the first paragraph that haphazardly builds itself—these bits and pieces are chiseled into stone, largely because the writers are afraid. Their fear of writing has made them victims of the writing anxiety syndrome.

This syndrome (the "granite complex" or "writer's block") has probably affected all writers at some point. Actually, writing instructors spend much of their time simply coaxing inexperienced writers into overcoming their fear of writing. "Confidence building" it is called. Poll any group and you will likely find that most consider themselves inferior writers. Ask them why. They will tell you that writing just bedevils them: "Besides," they say, "I'm math oriented. Wasn't born with the writing gift." If you pursue the question, you will find that these people are hostage to their own biographies; that is, enough people and enough experiences have conspired throughout their lives to convince them they cannot write well. They may also be convinced that you can do nothing to help them. Their very attitude, you see, is cast in granite.

Communication consultants, and writing teachers in general, know that the key to successful writing is attitude. No one can be forced to become a good writer; people simply must desire it. But their desire is often contaminated, sometimes suffocated, by fear. Even if you can convince people that with practice almost anyone can learn to write functional prose, you must get them to admit that *they*, these single individuals before you, can do it. Your clients *can* build their confidence, but only if you help them articulate their fears. Once identified, however, these fears can be mitigated.

The chief enemy in the *granite complex* is rigidity. The writer assumes a single attitude to all writing and is afraid to deviate from that attitude. Upon approaching the page, something like this unconsciously goes through the writer's mind: "all writing is the same; all readers are the same; I am the same." This ossification of self and context is what destroys the writer's confidence. People who enjoy writing do not experience this attitude freeze. In fact, they experience quite the opposite feeling.

For people who enjoy writing, the process is probing and exploratory. They see the blank page as a vehicle of discovery, an expendable sheet that is slave to the facts and ideas, not master of them. Words sometimes come fast and easy, sometimes slowly and hard; but words on a page, they recognize, can be changed at any time, as can the sentences which they form, and the paragraphs built from the sentences. Flexibility, change, and growth; a playful, experimental attitude toward expression; the realization that writing must be viewed first as a tentative, groping process full of false starts, exciting twists and turns, even frustrating losses at times—these make up the successful writer's attitude.

One thing more: the playful attitude toward writing recognizes that all communication is settled precariously upon the shifting sands of self perception and the relation of self to others. In short, human personality has multiple faces and attitudes, various *personae* or masks, that shift and blend one into another. These multiple personalities are shaped by both internal and external forces. Briefly, then, a writer's *persona* will always be determined by the problem at hand, by the nature of the audience being addressed, and by the writer's momentary self perception. It would take a lengthy volume indeed to explore these three variables in depth. Instead, I should like to offer some writer-based questions that directly chip away at the *granite complex*. The questions concentrate on the writer, the reader, and the data.

If your clients use these questions to probe writing attitudes and contexts, you might find that in time the "problem writers" can overcome, or at least reduce, their fear of writing. They will be concentrating on writing as a process, a dynamic interaction between writer and reader. Even though their writing will eventually freeze into a product (the written page), they will find that focusing on the process will make writing more enjoyable—certainly less terrifying.¹

WRITER'S ATTITUDE

Some primal law of survival in human nature, in nature itself, dictates that we take the path of least resistance. This underlying principle is sometimes the cause of the writer's block: evading work is simply easier than undertaking work. But since most of us are also victims of the Puritan ethic, we find it difficult to resolve the conflict between expectation and desire: put briefly, we experience guilt and thereby seek to rationalize our behavior. This process may be unconscious: we avoid acknowledging our need to defend the indefensible. But our minds will send us signals in the form of discomfort, fear, and anxiety.

At other times we are wholly conscious, uncomfortably so, of our shortcomings. We are distracted by various worries or personal concerns: we lack confidence in our mental prowess, in the conclusions we have derived, in our writing style itself. The following ten questions seek to probe these rather nasty little truths we all find difficult to admit:

1. Am I unconsciously evading work?
2. Am I not yet determined to begin?
3. Do I lack confidence in my reasoning ability?
4. Do I have other more important, more urgent business concerns that are distracting me?
5. Am I afraid of the results of my conclusions?
6. Am I afraid to make recommendations?
7. Is there something in my personal life that is distracting me?
8. Do I lack confidence in my writing style?
9. Do I lack confidence in my organizational abilities?
10. Does the situation make me nervous because a great deal of money, reputation, or power (mine/the company's) is at stake?

By facing the internal fear, by articulating the exact nature of the barrier, the writer may be able to neutralize the difficulty, and by so doing, proceed with an enlightened attitude and a lighter heart. The task may still be difficult, even overwhelming, but at least the writer has come to grips with some of the more terrifying personal aspects of the writing problem.

READER

If the writer has determined that the problem is not wholly self-generated, then maybe the reader is the cause. Fear or dislike

of, or lack of respect for, the reader may jaundice the approach and trigger a negative response so violent in the writer as to impair the writing process itself. The following five questions will help the writer determine the relationship to the reader:

1. Am I unsure of who my audience is?
2. Has the reader made the request clear to me?
3. Am I afraid of my reader?
4. Do I dislike my reader?
5. Do I have no respect for my reader?

Questions 2 and 3 will be the most difficult to handle, because they demand that the writer face some hard facts about self and others. If the request has not been made clear and if the writer is afraid of the person requesting the task, then the writer has to drum up the courage to engage in a confrontation. Your job as consultant is to emphasize how important it is for the writer to understand clearly the task at hand. No written communication can be successful unless the writer clearly apprehends the purpose of the communication. Stress to your client that more harm will come from "guessing" purpose than will come from a tactful request for task clarification. You may have to devote a good deal of your consulting time to this very problem, a most difficult problem because you will be dealing with self-concepts and with the need to be assertive in situations where the overwhelming impulse may be to withdraw.

DATA

With some writers, a block forms because of their perception of the problem they seek to solve. Yet they may not be consciously aware of this block. Whenever they think of the writing project, they experience a certain uneasiness, perhaps even anxiety, but are not sure exactly why. The first thing writers must do is confront the possibility that they may not be equal to the task. Perhaps their professional expertise lies in areas other than those dictated by the problem. Perhaps they have rushed the research or are unsure of the conclusions they have drawn from the data. Worst of all: perhaps after weeks or months of research, after pressure from superiors, after confronting rising expectations from all concerned, the writer finds there is really nothing new to contribute, yet everyone is expecting some kind of brilliant *tour de force*.

Needless to say, any of these problems could induce paralysis.

Give your clients the following list of eight questions; tell them to use the questions as a checklist the next time they experience a writing barrier. Explain that if they answer these questions honestly, they will be well on their way to dissolving the granite block:

1. Does the task seem overwhelming in its scope and complexity?
2. Am I confused by the data?
3. Have I more research to do?
4. Have I rushed my research?
5. Do I believe in the conclusions I have drawn from my data?
6. Am I clear about what should be emphasized or de-emphasized?
7. Are my interpretations of the data tenuous?
8. Do I really have nothing to say, yet feel that I should report something because it is expected?

Answering these questions will force the writer to be honest about the data to be communicated.

SOLUTIONS

As a communication consultant, you've undertaken only half your responsibility by clarifying the problems your client may face. The other half is to deliver solutions. With different people, of course, there will be different solutions. Where to begin presents a problem. For example, should one proceed by first examining the writer's attitude toward data? Or would it be better to question first the attitude toward self? Most likely the writer will have to work through all three categories until the solution is found; the order is not so important, however, as that the questioning procedure be complete. The following six-point schema is one I have found useful in consulting and in-house writing seminars. It sets out an effective approach to dissolving the granite barrier:

1. Conduct an honest self-assessment.
2. Conduct an honest reader-assessment.
 - 2.1 Ask these questions:
Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?
 - 2.2 Perform Task Clarification Interviews (insist on clear direction and seek continual feedback from the reader, if possible).
3. Handle data effectively.
 - 3.1 Brainstorm/Free write (random creativity).

- 3.2 Organize and criticize.
- 3.3 Collect data (according to priority or urgency).
- 3.4 Interpret or narrate data: Loop-Writing Process.
- 3.5 Conclude/summarize.
- 3.6 Recommend (when appropriate).
4. Edit (revise).
5. Proofread.
6. Seek outside review (have another person read it; outside review can occur at any point in the writing process).

Points two and three in this schema need some clarification. Probably the most important thing in point two is that the writer conduct an honest and vigorous task clarification interview. One of the most pervasive problems with assigned writing is that many writers just do not understand what is being asked of them. "Does Mr. Jones want a complete analysis of the entire problem? Am I to research the whole Eastern market for this survey? Does Ms. Johnson want the demographic projections for District 5 as well as District 6?" Many times the questions seem almost endless. Yet it is the writer's responsibility to ask the task originator about the desired research scope and methodology, and also to clarify the format and formal elements required in the final draft. To perform the writing task well, the writer must seek continual feedback from the task originator, whenever possible. A feedback loop must be engaged, whereby the writer receives relevant updating whenever necessary. Of course, one must not become a pest in this process; good judgment must be used, but whenever legitimate doubt occurs, the writer has the right, indeed the responsibility, to check with the task originator.

Point three may well be the point where the first writing blocks become apparent. To prevent these from the outset, writers should construct various psychological safety-nets. One of the best safety nets is simply to get something down on paper. Brainstorming sessions usually open up clogged channels because the critical faculty is completely suspended. Ideas are generated without giving any attention to their worth. In twenty-minute or half-hour sessions a writer can brainstorm much that will be useful ultimately in both ideas and organizational approaches. Closely allied to brainstorming is the process of free writing.

Free writing also allows the writer to be creative without being critical. As its name implies, free writing is writing literally free from constraint: the writer just writes madly for anywhere from 10 to 30 minutes. This somewhat associational technique often

allows the writer to tap the subconscious, where much that is good has been incubating. Because free writing emphasizes writing process rather than product, it is a good way to overcome a writing block. Free writing is akin to calisthenics; it is a limbering-up process that helps the writer move psychologically, physically and intellectually into firmly grasping inchoate thoughts through rough-and-ready articulation. The process, like priming a pump, opens up blocked channels and encourages a verbal flow.² Of course, free writing, like brainstorming, results in little that is useful as a final product. What both procedures do, however, is give the writer confidence, a firm place from which to start. After this, the writer organizes and then carefully develops the material.

Once a rudimentary form is given to the work, the writer is free to proceed in comfortable steps toward completion of the writing task. One interesting way to combine the creative (writing production) stage with the critical (organizing) stage has been developed by Peter Elbow. Really a guided or controlled free writing, Elbow's Loop-Writing Process sets up thirteen steps writers can use to help give form and substance to the work at hand.³ Here are five of the thirteen steps.

1. Write down first thoughts for at least 15 minutes.
2. Examine biases (This helps to clarify and strengthen ideas; it may also generate new ideas and focus objectives.)
3. Write an instant version (Without doing research, and by knowing very little about the subject, the writer will be able to relieve anxiety by getting down at least one version from which the writing can be developed and revised.)
4. Set up a dialogue (By creating an imagined argument, the writer can anticipate reader objections, and can clarify issues and focus premises. This step promotes the whole process of reasoning.)
5. Vary the audience (For example, in explaining a technical process, the writer may find whole new avenues of approach by pretending to write for a fifth grader rather than for a Ph.D. in physics.)

Elbow has 8 more variations that can be used, but these five are probably the most useful for writers of practical prose. What is most beneficial about Elbow's Loop Process is that it sets up a situation of controlled freedom; the loop is a feedback device that allows the writer to proceed faithfully toward the writing goal without needlessly wandering from it.

Actually, any method that allows the reader to progress is of value, even rather mechanical or superficial "tricks." For example,

I have had great luck sending "blocked" clients to the dictaphone or the cassette recorder. Many times they can talk through a problem they cannot write through; dictation frees them from the paper that impedes their articulation. Other tricks clients have found useful are these: compose directly from a typewriter; write large on huge yellow legal pads (spaciousness opens up the creative powers for some writers); write all scrunched up on tiny pieces of paper (squeezed writing taps into a kind of hoarding instinct that stirs the juices for other writers); take a nip of wine or spirits (the Edgar Allan Poe effect); walk around the block or lift weights (anything strenuous will start an adrenalin flow); wear your lucky baseball cap (the Oscar Madison syndrome); reorganize and neaten up your desk (the Felix Unger syndrome); review the material and sleep on it (incubation worked wonders for Einstein, Coleridge, and others); play some classical music. As you can see, this list could go on forever. The important thing is that the writer figure out what most effectively sets the creative flow in motion.

Thus, you see, the granite barrier need not block your client's way, especially if you spend a good deal of time explaining each aspect of this six-point schema, noting particularly how much attention is paid to attitude and to writing as a process. Note that editing, the final critical examination of the product, comes late in the process. People with writing barriers usually start editing the moment they construct their first sentence. Intensive early editing is the first sign that the writer is carving the communication into a very expensive piece of granite. Don't allow that. Get your writers to see the danger in being chained to granite. Get them to believe that, in very large part, writing success comes about only if they have the correct attitude. The correct attitude is usually nothing less than being honest, courageous, and playful.

NOTES

1. The last decade or so has seen increasing attention paid to writing as process rather than product; emphasis has been put on encouraging writers to recognize that a piece of writing "happens" in various ways. One of the seminal works in rhetoric theory is *Rhetoric: Discovery and Change* by Richard Young, Alton Becker, and Kenneth Pike (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970). This book uses the tagmemic linguistic approach and presents the heuristic matrix to help focus the writer's ability for invention through problem-solving. Linda Flower's *Problem-Solving Strategies for Writing* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1981), applies the heuristic

(strategy-based) approach to writing, paying special attention to definition of the writing goal and the audience. Some especially good insights into prewriting can be found in Jim Corder's *Contemporary Writing* (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1979) and in Greg and Elizabeth Cowan's *Writing* (New York: Wiley, 1980). Two books with very useful ideas on ways to help writers overcome their anxieties are by Peter Elbow. *Writing Without Teachers* (New York: Oxford, 1973) focuses on ways to melt writing blocks through invention. Perhaps more valuable for business communication professionals is Elbow's *Writing with Power* (New York: Oxford, 1981), for here he pays special attention to the writing process in practical writing as well as creative writing.

2. Ken Macrorie, *Telling Writing*, 2nd edition (Rochelle Park, NJ: Hayden, 1980) and J. Brown, et al., *Free Writing! A Group Approach* (Rochelle Park, NJ: Hayden, 1977) offer many insights into the advantages of free writing as a tool to get people to open up their creative processes by concentrating on personal experience.

3. Peter Elbow, *Writing With Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 59-77.

Training Public Administrators to Communicate: A Policy/Behavior Approach

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Training public administrators to communicate effectively is at once both essential and difficult. Communication, or exchange of information, is the lifeblood of public agencies, touching all departments, affecting every employee, involving every conceivable channel including (but certainly not limited to) manuals, reports, interviews, memoranda and lunchtime conversations. Effective communication is the current that keeps an agency moving—the spark that makes it alive. A recent survey by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs/Administration (NASPAA) shows that public executives tend to consider oral and written communication skills the most important ability for administrators to have.¹ A survey of in-career public administration students finds that over 80 percent think communication an important subject area, with students who are managers much more likely to consider it important.²

Yet, despite this consensus, the NASPAA study shows that public executives tend to rank "inability to write clearly" as the most prevalent skill deficiency in young professionals. Time and again public administrators send messages that their colleagues and clients simply cannot understand. The message is poorly focused and unorganized; the language is inappropriate; too many statements must be taken on faith—no evidence exists to support them. Because of insensitivity, messages sometimes have exactly the opposite effect than that which the sender intended.³

Lack of sufficient preparation in undergraduate and graduate public administration curricula contributes to this problem as does an overly narrow approach taken by many in-house programs in imparting communication skills. This essay analyzes some of the educational and professional development factors that contribute to perpetuating bureaucratic "miscommunication" and explores concrete steps that in-career training programs can take to foster effective skills. In particular, it identifies an overly-narrow approach some developers take in imparting communication abilities and investigates a proposed "policy/behavior" alternative.

FOSTERING MISCOMMUNICATION

The modern public administration curriculum tends to relegate communication to low status. Many B.S. and M.P.A. programs have no course in organizational communication. Those that do often use texts which have remained technique-centered while the rest of the curriculum has expanded to include policy-environment and behavioral orientations.⁴ The focus remains fixed on discrete grammatical and structural procedures (as if the administrator needs a bag of tricks for writing and speaking effectively) while other parts of the curriculum make progress toward linking managerial concerns with problem solving in a political environment.

Much of this narrow focus carries over into in-house and contract training for mid-career administrators. A recent survey of mid-career offerings for improving public administrators' writing in the New York metropolitan area found that most were technique centered.⁵ Half used multiple-choice pre- and post-tests, suggesting that students acquire knowledge about communicating rather than change their behavior at the agency. (Thus, one test asks trainees to choose the best definitions for informational, analytical, recommendation, progress, and evaluation reports rather than asking them to write these reports under sharp constraints of time and budget.)

Workshop modules tend to address discrete topics such as writing memoranda, papers and reports; conducting interviews; chairing staff meetings, etc. In the real world, each of these topics impinges on all the others. (For example, ability to write a persuasive memo to staff may depend on knowledge gained at a meeting.) But in many workshops, each topic is presented as an encapsulated entity. Trainees learn rules for writing and listening but do not learn how these rules relate to each other or to solving agency problems.

Trainees acquire the techniques of communicating without adequate emphasis on the goals; they are taught rules without much chance to analyze the root concepts behind them. Too often there is a troubling disinclination to integrate the pieces of the communication puzzle—to ask, "Why do it this way and not another?"

In-house communication training is often apolitical although the political parameters of public agency systems influence the barriers to effective message transmission. Certain communication

problems are unique to the the public sector. For example, agencies are created by city, state or federal legislatures to whom they are accountable. Periodically, reports must be sent from administrators to legislative overseers. In translating technical material for a lay audience with electoral rather than professional concerns, it is sometimes only too easy to give events a rosy tint or let inaccuracies slip through.

Because of civil service regulations, public executives often have fewer punitive sanctions against subordinates than do their business counterparts. This increases the importance of sensitivity and persuasiveness in getting internal messages across. People who deal with private organizations generally choose their role as clients; many "clients" of agencies such as police, welfare or public housing have no alternative. Their resentment can increase the probability of selective perception by administrator and client alike.

To develop administrators who can communicate, public in-house training must shift to a wider, more integrative orientation that stresses the particular problems of communicating in a political environment. An apolitical emphasis on encapsulated techniques is at war with the model scholars and practitioners set for effective public administration training as a whole.

AN INTEGRATED ORIENTATION

The British scholar, Rowland Egger, stresses the centrality of cohesion in public administration training, highlighting the importance of developing administrators who have a behavioral foundation for making cogent decisions, a primary concern for whole people, and an approach to problem solving that stresses synthesis rather than compartmentalization. Egger calls for training that expands "capacities for integrative thinking, for intellectual and moral leadership, and for human relations"; he believes that in the long run it is as important for administrators to know why certain procedures are followed as "to know what to do and how it is done."⁶

If communication is to receive the central place it deserves in public administration training, it "needs to be rescued as a subject of study from the technical preoccupations that have dominated it in the past."⁷ Workshops have to concentrate on the "bigger questions" that link communicating with central agency concerns,

particularly the question of how effective communication helps an agency fulfill its mission.

Workshops that attempt this rescue operation have to (1) identify communication as "the basic process out of which all other functions derive" not as "a secondary. . . aspect of organizations—a 'helper' of the other and more basic functions,"⁸ and (2) back up this assumption by developing modules and exercises that link communication skill to effective decision making in a political system. This requires a policy/behavior approach that is explained in greater detail below.

Policy

Communicating is viewed as organizational problem solving. Trainees analyze the various political and organizational environments in which communication takes place as well as the techniques suitable for each environment. Attention is focused on the impact that various organizational situations have on the effectiveness of different communication techniques with appropriate theories and insights from the social and behavioral sciences illuminating links between procedures and environments. Attention is paid to the social psychology of small groups and to the insights of leadership theory. Topics include biases of information, ambiguity and the communication process, presentation of information to elected officials, organization and packaging of information for various client groups, the role of communication in building support for agency programs and the influence of agency communication on the public's perception of the agency.⁹

Behavior

An integrated orientation assumes that trainees want to acquire specific communication skills in order to enhance their behavior at work. Accordingly the goal of training is behavior change, not a mere acquisition of knowledge *per se*.

Role plays and simulations are prime instructional strategies because they can develop behavior. The key is to prepare simulations that have real-world validity for a given bureau, including attributes of stress, conflict and ambiguity.¹⁰ What is suitable will vary with the trainees' positions and responsibilities.

Effective evaluation also assesses for more than knowledge acquisition and proficiency in technique. It is better to assess

writing skills through an in-basket than by asking trainees to submit a letter.¹¹ The in-basket shows how trainees communicate under budgetary, informational and time constraints. It forces them to read two or three items and synthesize before gauging the parameters of a given problem. It gives the trainees an opportunity to decide whether it is appropriate to solve the problem by writing a memo, making a telephone call, or deferring action.

Group simulations have similar advantages for assessing oral skills. It is better to have trainees role play interviews or small-group meetings (where a client or subordinate's true motives are ambiguous) than to schedule prepared five-minute speeches. Few times in agency life can an administrator prepare his or her entire oral message; learning to respond to feedback is crucial.

Simulations can be used at a workshop's start to plan individual sequences of exercises. They can be used at the end to provide feedback. (Sometimes it makes sense to use the same exercise several times, letting trainees role play both the communicator and one or more members of the intended audience; this affords an opportunity to see how a particular message looks from two or more perspectives.)

To sum up: The purpose of communication training is to develop public administrators who can effectively exchange information in agencies. A technique-centered approach does this inadequately—it fails to motivate by leaving out the “why” and the connection between communicating and reaching agency goals. A policy/behavior approach is best suited for producing administrators who know the importance of communicating and translate that knowledge into effective behaviors.

NOTES

1. Michael A. Murray, “Education for Public Administrators,” *Public Personnel Management*, 5 (July-August, 1976), 239-249.

2. John Lee and William Anthony, “Educational Needs of Part-Time Graduate Students,” *Public Personnel Management*, 2 (March-April, 1973), 93-98.

3. See, for example, Patrick V. Murphy's account of his experiences as police commissioner of Detroit in *Commissioner: A View from the Top of American Law Enforcement* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1977), pp. 127-129.

4. Courses in public agency communication generally use texts that cover public and private organizations. Two examples of technique-centered books

are Donal W. McIntosh, *Techniques of Business Communication*, 2nd. ed. (Boston: Holbrook Press, 1977) and George T. Vardaman and Patricia Black Vardaman, *Communication in Modern Organizations* (New York: John Wiley, 1973).

5. Michael V. Gershowitz, "Programs for the Improvement of Writing in the Public Sector: A Sampling of Offerings in the Metropolitan New York Area." Paper presented at the 1981 Annual Conference of the American Society for Public Administration, Detroit, April 13, 1981.

6. Rowland Egger, "Civil Servants at Mid-Career: Management Training in American Universities," *Public Administration* (1975), 83-98.

7. Don K. Price uses these words to discuss the predicament of the entire subfield of public personnel administration of which communication training can be considered a part. See, "1984 and Beyond: Social Engineering or Political Values," in Frederick Mosher (ed.) *American Public Administration: Past, Present, Future* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1975), p. 249.

8. Alex Bavelas and D. Barrett, "An Experimental Approach to Organizational Communication," *Personnel*, XXVII (1951), 355-371.

9. For an examination of the importance of these topics to understanding the development and implementation of public policy, see Carl Van Horn and Stephen E. Salmore, "Designing an M.A. Program in Public Policy and Survey Research," *DEA News* (1979), 21-22.

10. See Hindy Lauer Schachter, "Simulations for Training and Assessment: The Problem of Relevance to the Real World," *Public Personnel Management*, vol. 9, no. 3 (1980), 225-227.

11. A good discussion and example of an in-basket appears in Richard W. Beatty and Craig Eric Schneier, *Personnel Administration: An Experiential Skill-Building Approach* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1977), pp. 221-256.

Helping Engineers Prepare Training Material for Nontechnical Audiences[©]

Jessie Gunn Stephens

In many companies, if production workers are to have training, engineers must help provide it. Limitations of time, staff, and budget often keep organizational training groups too busy or too specialized to generate all the materials needed to train production operators. Engineers must then become personally involved in communicating the proper use of their research to the people responsible for making money with it. Frequently, the training organization is called upon to instruct or aid engineers in producing written materials for that purpose.

When management asks trainers to support engineering's training efforts, the request for help may take either of two forms: "We need a course teaching engineers to write effective instructions"; or, "We need over-the-shoulder monitoring of our engineers' writing projects." Such requests show that someone has recognized a major difficulty in recruiting engineers to produce training matter.

It is not that engineers do not know how to write. Many of them are experienced, even published, writers. The problem is that their experience consists largely of producing such sentences as "The treatment of sample inhomogeneity where T is replaced by $T+T_i$ (Ref. 14) was tested on the four samples of n-InSb."¹ The niceties of grammatical expression are not at issue here. Communication is at issue. What managers are really saying when they ask for help is, "Show our engineers how to communicate with nontechnical people."

The disparity of knowledge between technical and nontechnical people is the trainer's bread and butter. To the engineer, programmer, or development scientist, the disparity is not always so obvious. They know there is a knowledge gap between them and their prospective readers, but many do not truly appreciate its extent or do not know what to do about it.

When required to write training materials, most technical professionals will strive industriously to communicate with their

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nontechnical audience; but the result is often wrongly focused, lacking in essential detail, or even misleading. Engineers tend to write users' manuals or process specifications instead of training material. When they do not fully appreciate the difference between what they know and what their audience can be expected to know, engineers base their writing upon unjustified assumptions about the reader and miss their target.

Communications training for engineers consists largely in persuading them to examine their assumptions closely and to decide logically whether each is justified. Asking themselves, "What am I taking for granted about my readers' background?" engineers can analyze, and judge the validity of, their presuppositions. The trainer is there to help them examine the detailed assumption-base from which they are operating and alter it to fit reality. As a starting point, the trainer may urge engineers charged with producing training materials to think about their prospective readers' job knowledge, vocabulary, and motivation.

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT AUDIENCE JOB KNOWLEDGE

The competent trainer will know how to teach engineers to analyze a target population. Applying the analysis to the details of a particular job is the hard part. To do it successfully, engineers must be persuaded to challenge their assumptions about some pretty elementary factors of job knowledge.

Can they take it for granted, for instance, that readers will know how to convert mils to inches or decimals to fractions when instructed to do so? How safe is it to assume they can interpret cryptic error messages and take appropriate action? Do they know why they must wear safety glasses in some areas? Why they must not store certain chemicals in glass containers? Which machinery needs constant monitoring and which will be all right on its own while they go on break? What the knobs they turn and the switches they pull actually accomplish? Engineers who instruct their readers to "Turn the bias knob," when no knob on the instrument is labeled "BIAS," or even "B," get what they deserve.

The following list presents a number of other elements the engineer will need to consider about the audience's job knowledge. Do readers already know:

1. what physical principles a machine operates by?
2. how to read a dial, gauge, or printout and get meaningful

information from it?

3. how their job relates to other jobs upstream and downstream; why both their jobs and the whole process are important?

4. how to handle paperwork: shop sheets, logs, specifications?

5. what causes equipment to malfunction and how to prevent or react to problems?

6. what they can do to prevent process errors?

7. how to recognize when they need help and where to get it?

Trainees may not need to know all these things. With forethought, engineers can make conscious decisions about what readers can be expected to know and what they must be taught or else cannot be held accountable for. Before writing, as a stand-alone instruction, "Use the conversion table in Figure 22 to find the correct value," well-trained engineers will be confident their readers are equipped to do so.

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT AUDIENCE VOCABULARY

Much has been written of jargon's sins against communication. Professional communicators have expended a lot of effort toward getting programmers and engineers to *stop talking that way*. The effort is largely wasted. They talk, and write, that way because they *want* to talk and write that way. It evidently fulfills certain needs which we are not concerned here to identify or analyze. They will undoubtedly continue to write, "With the manual switch in the 'On' position, processing will proceed by manually stepping through process programming," instead of, "With the manual switch 'On,' you must do each step of the process by hand," because that is the way they want to write.

However, the trainer has a bit of leverage in combating such usages in engineer-written training material: the authors are usually writing about their own work. They are proud of what they have invented and have a vested interest in its successful implementation. Hence, the canniest trainers avoid direct attacks against jargon. Instead, they appeal to the engineers' desire to enhance their own products. They ask technical people to test the usefulness of their assumptions, to discard or replace whatever does not inform, to adapt their language to their audience's—all from self interest. To back up this appeal, the trainers must emphasize two points. Jargon blocks self-interest. Engineers command enough language skills to achieve their purpose without it.

Sometimes, analogies like the following provoke useful insights.

"Suppose," the trainer may invite the would-be communicator, "the shoe were on the other foot. Suppose I hand you a copy of one of the great poems of the English language, say Dylan Thomas' 'Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night.'"

"Here," I say, "I'm going to share my insight with you. I'm going to teach you how to explicate this villanelle. 'First,' I explain carefully, 'you should know that a villanelle is a French verse form. It has two rhymes throughout five tercets and a quatrain.' I pause expectantly but am confronted with blank stares.

"Look," I implore, "can't you see how the first and last lines of the first tercet recur alternately at the ends of the other tercets and again as the last two lines of the quatrain?" Still no response from the trainee.

"You lout," I scream. "This is a very important verse form, and this poem is one of its finest modern manifestations. Explicate it at once!"

"If you graduated from college, you've heard every one of those jargon terms before," the trainer continues. "You may even have a general idea of what some of them mean. But it is the rare engineer who will respond at once, after a 'training session' like that just described, with 'Ah, yes, of course, aba aba aba aba abaa. Let's talk about the assonance and alliteration.' And it is the rare word processing initiate who will confidently approach her task when instructed to 'down load the system,' instead of to 'turn the power switch off, then back on.' If, baffled by your enigmatic phrasing, she calls an expensive repair service to get the system back up, it makes your product look bad.

"In forming that instruction, you had a choice of words at your command. *Choice*, of course, is the key.

"When you write a letter to a friend, you consciously shape it according to your expectations about your friend's reactions to the words you choose. You chuckle as you devise witticisms he'll be sure to appreciate. You select tactful phrasing to convey bad news. When you refer to someone who is not a mutual acquaintance, you identify that person in terms of shared experience or knowledge.

"Acutely aware of your friend's perceptions, you don't talk down to him, and you don't avoid complex or abstract concepts. You *choose* language, words for discussing your personal goals, your triumphs and failures, your love life, and any other esoteric concept you please.

"You succeed in communicating with your friend because, although you do not demand that he share all your specialized vocabulary, nothing you want to say is so subtle as to be beyond the capacity of your common language to express.

"If you want to help production workers put your research to really effective use, you will take a similar approach to writing training materials.

"Make a conscious effort to choose, out of all the words at your command, the ones most likely to ensure that trainees will be able to do what you want them to do. Rely on words and expressions you have in common with your readers. Carefully explain new concepts or relate them to old ones. You *can* communicate highly technical concepts to a nontechnical audience if you are continuously conscious of the disparity between your working vocabulary and theirs."

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT AUDIENCE MOTIVATION

Frustrations inevitably attendant upon trying to communicate with a nontechnical audience will sometimes lead earnest engineers to conclude: "They don't learn to do the process right because they really don't *care*." Engineers who assume that trainees are not motivated toward successful implementation of their brilliant inventions tend to get a bit testy.

Eventually, they may be reduced to a strident way of writing which can be called the "Go, and sin no more" style, a chastening mode characterized by liberal use of exhortation which does not provide usable information. The problem with exhortation is that it often *appears* to contain instruction, deluding the writer, and perhaps the editor, into believing such material valid for training.

Admonition disguised as instruction invariably baffles would-be users, no matter what their personal stake in doing the job "right."

"Make sure you are reading the instrument correctly."

"Verify that the instrument is completely charged."

"Be sure to leave enough room between the lines."

"Change the wheel whenever wear prevents adequate grinding."

"Check to see that outage has not occurred."

Such hortatory phrases are meaningless unless: (1) they clearly refer to well-defined parameters, (2) the reader knows they refer to those parameters, and (3) the reader knows what the parameters are or how to find out. The writer must also define what to do if

the conditions these phrases condemn should obtain, as they certainly will, sooner or later. "Once I figure out that I'm *not* reading the instrument correctly, *then* what must I do?"

Most trainees want to learn the best way to do their jobs. Engineers must show them how. "Go, and sin no more" is not useful instruction. Moreover, the writer who exhorts without defining parameters risks impugning the reader's integrity, seeming to imply doubt about his or her ethical development. And *that* can produce motivation problems where none existed before.

The more fruitful assumption is that workers will do the job correctly once they know how. The burden is on the instruction-writer.

CONCLUSION

Communication training for engineers can help them generate more effective training material. Alert engineers, intent upon securing the best use of their research by workers, can be trained to explore their assumptions in detail. Guided by their trainer, they will make sure their writing addresses an audience's specific job skills, in comprehensible language. They will assume responsibility for effective communication, instructing rather than scolding. And they will test their documents before they release them for use in training.

Underlying all other assumptions in the production of instructional material is the one that says, "This is a usable document." Trainers know that assumption must be field-tested before it can be considered reliable. Engineers may have to be told.

NOTES

1. Anthony Stephens, *The Shubnikov-de Haas Effect in N-Type Indium Antimonide* (Ph.D. dissertation, 1975).

Ethical and Political Issues in Communication Consulting

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The sale and purchase in a market arena of an intangible product that is not well defined creates a unique set of political and ethical issues. Because communication is intangible and dynamic, communication consultants face unique political and ethical issues. The client/consultant relationship might be compared to the relationship between two young lovers: always changing, uncertain, but exciting. Just as an absolute set of political and ethical guidelines cannot be written that would cover all the relationships for young lovers, an absolute set of guidelines cannot be established for communication consultants.

Although it is not possible to establish a set of guidelines for every communication consulting situation, the many issues that consultants face may be reviewed. A review provides an opportunity for communication consultants to develop ethical and political frameworks for dealing with the many issues they face. Consultants have probably already developed a complex political and ethical value system; however, they may not have attempted to apply these value systems to the consultant/client relationship.

ETHICS COMPARED TO POLITICS

Before reviewing the many political and ethical issues that consultants face, it is necessary to analyze these two concepts. The best way to do this is to directly compare the two terms. A person concerned with a political issue is involved with the kind of action beneficial or harmful to that individual. For example, the well-known maxim "Honesty is the best policy" exemplifies politics because it is really saying that to advance one's own interests, one should be honest. It is often necessary to solicit the help of others to accomplish what a person wants in life, and to obtain this help one should have a reputation of honesty. Hence, honesty is a matter of politics. For the sake of this article, political action is that action which advances one's own interests.

On the other hand, ethical issues deal with the question of

whether actions are right or wrong. Here the question is, "How can I do what is right for the sake of society?" This question has puzzled thinkers for centuries, and unfortunately (or fortunately) there is no agreed upon answer. Someone concerned with ethics does not simply try to determine what actions are in his or her own best interests, but rather what actions are right or wrong for all concerned.

An example of political and ethical actions for a communication consultant involves the feedback provided to a company after a training session. Assume that certain critical factors were not revealed in the needs analysis before the training session, and this resulted in an ineffective training program. Further, assume that the management of the company, which does not have any first-hand data, believes the program was effective. Upon completion of the program, should the consultant indicate that the program was relatively ineffective? The political action would be to present feedback to management indicating the program was effective. However, the consultant faces a difficult political and ethical decision: if accurate feedback is presented (i.e., the training was ineffective), the company may lose confidence in the consultant and hire someone else for future activities. This may not be the best action for all concerned because the second consultant would not have the benefit of experience gained by the first consultant and may therefore actually be less effective. What feedback should the consultant present to the company?

This article reviews political and ethical issues arising in communication consulting. No concrete answers can be presented to these problems; however, a review will help communication consultants develop their personal orientation to political and ethical issues. To assist this discussion, the flow chart in Figure 1 (page 167) outlines the consultant/client relationship. The issues are discussed in the order of the numbered steps.

MARKETING YOURSELF AS A CONSULTANT (1)

What are the communication areas in which one is competent as a consultant? This question must be answered in both a political and ethical manner to avoid future problems.

For example, some members of the medical profession have created problems for themselves because they have not defined their areas of competency. As medical doctors become more and

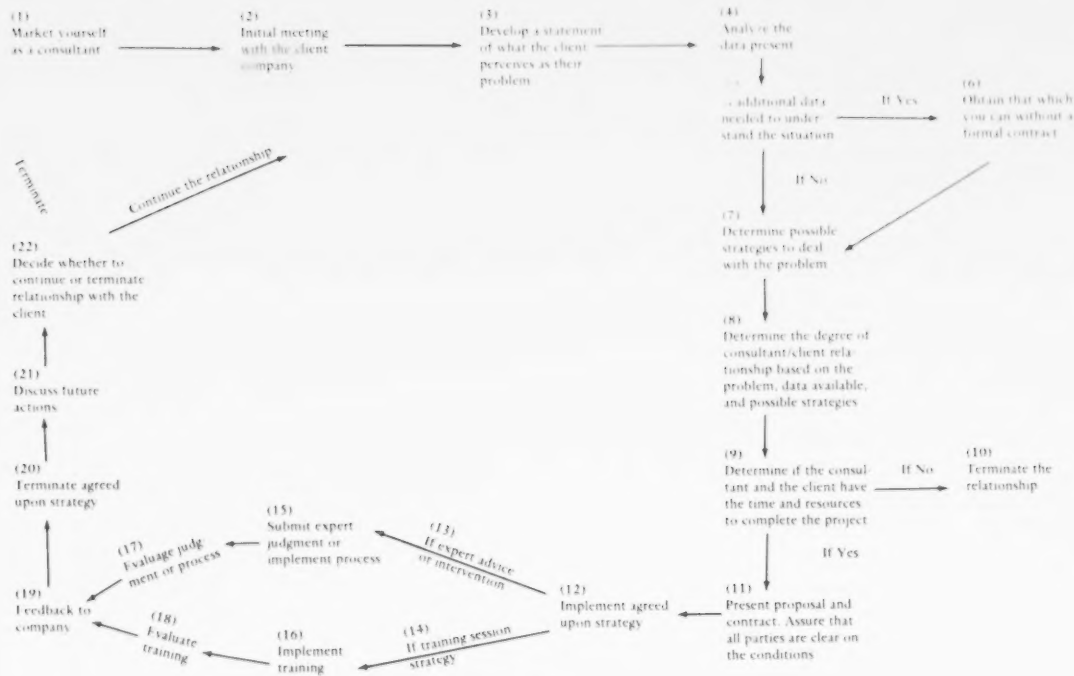


FIGURE 1
THE CONSULTANT/CLIENT RELATIONSHIP

more specialized, they become less qualified to deal with complex problems in other speciality areas. However, the public will still turn to specialists for assistance in areas other than those for which they are competent. The specialist may actually do more harm than good by serving a patient because the patient believes he or she has received competent assistance. Therefore, the patient may lose confidence in all areas of the medical profession because the problem has not been alleviated.

The same situation may face the communication consultant. It may be politically wise to market oneself as an expert in all areas of communication; however, this may present some difficult ethical questions when a request for services is received. It is not easy to objectively determine personal areas of expertise, especially when it is personally satisfying to receive a request for your services.

INITIAL MEETING WITH THE CLIENT COMPANY (2)

The major political concern in the initial meeting is to assure that the correct representatives of the company are present: those with the most knowledge of the problem and those with the power to make decisions.

However, the organizational politics of the client company and the politics of the consultant may be in conflict. It may not be politically wise to request that a certain person attend the meeting if he or she is in competition with others already scheduled for the meeting. Unfortunately, the person left out may be the more knowledgeable source as well as the true decision maker. The request then becomes an ethical issue. The consultant may be unable to complete the task effectively unless the correct people are included in the initial meeting, but it may not be wise to request that certain people be present.

A request by a personnel manager for supervisory communication training can be used as an example of this problem. When the personnel manager organized the initial meeting to discuss the specific content of the program, a key production manager was not invited because the two managers compete rather than cooperate with each other. Unfortunately, many of the supervisors scheduled for the training are in the production department. Should the consultant request that the production manager be at the meeting to add insights and provide support from the

production department? This is a tough decision that the consultant must make.

Another problem may develop if the contact person from the client company is just looking for some "free" advice or recommendations from the consultant. Is it ethical for the consultant to withhold initial recommendations until a formal contract is developed? How does the consultant define when he or she should begin to charge for services?

REACTION TO THE CLIENT'S STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM (3)

There is no political or ethical issue involved with the fact that there should be a clear understanding of the problem. The political and ethical issue at this step involves selective attention on the part of the consultant. Politically, the consultant may want to see only that part of the problem which is in the domain of his or her professional expertise. Ethically, should the consultant ignore other problem areas that are not in his or her area of expertise, even though they may have major implications?

The communication skills of the consultant compound the complexity of the issue at this stage. The effective consultant will be asking key questions and listening to the client. If a nondirective communication technique is used, the client may come to realize that communication is not the real problem of the organization.

Has the communication consultant been asked to investigate only the communication realm of a problem and to ignore other facets of the organization? What if it is necessary to resolve other problems before the communication problem can be resolved? This must be considered in the initial statement of the problem.

ANALYZING AND OBTAINING DATA TO DETERMINE PROBLEM SOLVING STRATEGIES (4, 5, 6)

In the initial meeting the consultant is provided with quantitative and qualitative data relative to the problem. Consultants generally want more information than is provided, but how much time and effort should be expended in obtaining the information? Also what level of understanding is required by the consultant? The first question is this: can a decision be made without more information?

Would a decision with this level of data be valid or would it be a "shot in the dark" that could be passed off as professional judgment? This is an ethical issue.

The second question involves a political decision. How much time and effort should be spent attempting to gather data for a sound decision when no formal contract has been agreed upon? Would the consultant look more professional if he/she didn't require extra data?

DETERMINING POSSIBLE STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM (7)

There may be a difference between the strategy that the consultant believes the client would accept and the strategy that the consultant considers the most effective. There may also be a difference between the strategy which would be the most profitable for the consultant and that which would be most effective. These are ethical issues that deserve serious consideration by the consultant.

For instance, the consultant may conclude that a training program is required and that it would be best to have no more than 10 participants per class. However, the client may be accustomed to large sessions of 25 participants each. This presents a difficult dilemma if the consultant's fee is based on the number of total participants involved in the program.

A major political issue deals with visible results. An effective strategy may not show visible results for a long time, whereas a less effective strategy may show some immediate results. Should a consultant be willing to make trade-offs when facing this issue?

The question may boil down to whether the client should be given what is needed or what is wanted. The client may have determined that a certain strategy would be best for the problem at hand; however, the professional communication consultant knows that a different strategy would be more effective. What is the ethical and political trade-off between what the client wants and what is needed? No concrete guidelines can be developed for this situation as it must be resolved on a personal, professional basis.

DEGREE OF CONSULTANT-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP (8)

Just as there are degrees of involvement in a friendship between two people, there are degrees of involvement in a relationship between client and consultant. The intensity of an interpersonal friendship proceeds along a continuum: friendly acquaintances, social friends, close friends, and loving relationships (the ultimate in intensity). The analogy for the consulting relationship is this: giving advice but not actually getting involved in the problem; helping out on special aspects of the problem; actually taking over certain tasks to resolve the problem; and becoming responsible for certain activities to resolve the problem. Table 1 presents an example of how this fits a specific activity of a communication consultant.

TABLE 1
CLIENT/CONSULTANT RELATIONSHIP COMPARED
TO AN INTERPERSONAL FRIENDSHIP

Interpersonal Friendship	Consulting Relationship	Example: Difficulty with Formal Technical Reports
Friendly Acquaintances	Give Expert Advice	Suggest ways to improve the reports
Social Friends	Help out on special problems	Train
Close Friends	Take over certain tasks	Help to write the actual proposals
Love Relationships	Become responsible for certain client activities	Take full responsibility for writing proposals

Just as political and ethical games are played in interpersonal friendships, so are numerous political and ethical issues involved in the consultant/client relationship. One political issue concerns the extent to which the consultant should take over the tasks and responsibilities of the client. Is the goal of the consultant to complete the task, or is the goal to teach the client to complete

the task? This should be answered early in order to avoid later problems.

Dependency

If the consultant can teach the client to complete the task and to become responsible for the task, the client may eventually outgrow the need for the consultant. This is like rearing children: the parent wants to assist the child to mature but doesn't like to see the child become independent. The consultant should objectively determine the extent to which he or she wants to keep the client dependent.

The question of dependency is also an ethical issue. Is it best for the client to become independent? It is possible that the consultant would like to see the client become independent or vice versa when the client is not ready for independence.

Involvement

Another issue in this category of "relationship" is the image of involvement that a consultant presents versus the real level of involvement. For instance, the client may desire one level of relationship, but the consultant knows that a different level would be best. In order to satisfy the client and retain a customer, the consultant may attempt to give the image of the client's desired level of relationship. An example will clarify this situation.

A consultant conducts a communication audit and finds that middle management is not clearly communicating job responsibilities to first-line supervisors. The consultant recommends a program in which middle managers are to write and review job descriptions with the first-line supervisors. However, top management believes that the consultant should actually work together with the middle managers and supervisors. A conflict develops between the client and consultant, and a political and ethical issue develops. To what extent should the consultant become involved in the problems of the client? A person may be more effective at one level of involvement but may find it more personally and financially gratifying at another level.

Ownership

Another issue integral to the concept of relationship is the

"ownership" of a recommendation or program. When should a consultant give a manager a recommendation or program and make it appear that it is really the client's? Who should own the program, and when should it be mutual ownership? This issue is compounded when a high level of risk is involved in the recommendation or program.

For instance, a consultant may recommend to the chief operations manager that a specific set of procedures (e.g., published agendas, time limits, minutes) be followed for all managerial meetings. When the operations manager passes the recommendation on to the other managers, should he or she take full credit and responsibility for the recommendation or should the consultant's name be put on it? In essence, who takes credit for successes and responsibility for failures, the manager or the consultant?

TIME AND RESOURCES TO COMPLETE THE PROJECT (9)

The time and resources of both the client and the consultant are important factors in communication consulting. It is not uncommon for a manager to commit a client company to a project when in reality the employees don't have the time for it. One of the problems is that the manager for the client company doesn't realize the amount of time investment that will be required. The political and ethical issue in question is the level of commitment that the consultant should get from the client before the project is continued.

The client may expect the consultant to solve all of the client's problems with little assistance or commitment from the client. It is virtually impossible to accomplish this in any area of communication consulting; however, it may be politically unwise to tell the client that they will be required to invest a major commitment of their own time and resources. This may take away from the professional image of the consultant because it may appear that he or she can't handle the job alone. The ethical question is the extent to which the consultant should elaborate on this concept of mutual investment with the client. Can it be assumed that a professional manager should be well aware of the need for commitment? Or should the consultant require a level of commitment from the client with the possibility that it will potentially cause a lack of credibility and disenfranchise the client?

The time commitment of the consultant is another issue. It is easy to over-commit and then find it necessary to cut corners to get everything done on schedule. Most consultants dislike the thought of turning down a project because such action may preclude the opportunity for future projects with the client; however, everyone has certain times when it is virtually impossible to handle all the requests. The consultant should determine whether it would be acceptable to "cut corners" on a project or whether the project should be refused.

PRESENTING THE PROPOSAL AND IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY (11-16)

Professional Fee

A major issue with the proposal involves pricing. What is a reasonable professional fee? This is a difficult question, but an even more difficult one may arise as the relationship develops. Just as a client becomes more dependent upon a particular lawyer in the middle of an extended court case, so a client company may become more dependent upon a communication consultant. Should the fee change as the client becomes more dependent upon a particular consultant? It is also possible that the consultant initially began with a lower fee in order to develop the relationship but now finds that he or she is much busier. How should this affect the fee? These are both political and ethical issues that the consultant faces.

Terms of the Proposal

Another issue at this stage deals with the wording of the proposal or contract and the consulting activities. As with any specialty, a difference of interpretation may develop. Take the example of a training session. The consultant may state that upon completion of the training an evaluation report will be submitted to management. The client may interpret this as a report on each individual member of the training program whereas the consultant meant a report on the group as a whole. Problems may develop as a result of lack of clarity in the contract or proposal.

The inability to deliver services specified in the proposal will also generate untold problems for the consultant. This is highly

related to the time and resource issue discussed earlier. There may be a natural political tendency to make the proposal sound extremely comprehensive and detailed even though it has not been determined whether the services can really be delivered.

Implement the Strategy

Once a strategy has been determined and is agreed upon in the proposal, it is implemented by the consultant. However, as in any dynamic situation, there may be a tendency to make a change in strategy once it is implemented. This could be due to either a change in the organization or a change in the consultant's perception of the organization. An issue develops when a change in strategy is considered that does not fit into the provisions of the contract or proposal.

Several types of changes may cause a problem. First, certain steps in a strategy could functionally be omitted that would save the consultant time and resources. Should these be omitted with or without alterations to the agreed upon proposal? Second, the selected strategy may not be functional and may need to be altered or completely changed. Should the consultant continue with the selected strategy because it has been agreed upon or should it be revised? The consultant may politically lose "face" with the client if he wants to change the strategy, yet this may be the ethical approach.

Such problems occur frequently. Imagine a communication consultant hired to present a training seminar for supervisors on the principles of interpersonal communication. Shortly into the program the plant manager presents a major communication barrier to the supervisor. The manager considers communication training worthless and does not support any of the information presented in either practice or principle. The situation is so bad that it may not be functional for the training to continue. What should the consultant do? Should the training be continued? Should the consultant report back to the general manager? Should a different strategy be proposed to the general manager even though the first strategy is not completed? These are not easy questions.

Training can present many difficult issues at this stage of the consulting relationship. Imagine that a consultant is retained to train a group of managers on several topics, one of which is conducting meetings. However, these managers don't want to

become involved in this topic because they dislike meetings. It would be easy for the consultant to skip over this topic, and it might even be the politically wise thing to do in order to avoid hostility. The ethical issue is obvious in this case, but it is contaminated by the fact that training on this topic may not have any effect anyway.

Another problem that no consultant wants to face may develop at this stage of the relationship. The organization's problem may be more complex than the consultant is capable of handling. This may be considered an ego deflating experience by some, but any consultant may have to face this situation at one time or another. When it does develop, consultants must objectively determine their own capabilities and limitations.

THE EVALUATION PROCESS (17, 18)

A series of ethical and political questions needs to be answered in the evaluation process. First, how extensive an evaluation should the consultant conduct? Often the consultant has a "feel" for the effectiveness of a program, so there is a tendency not to take the extra step of formal program evaluation. When should the consultant incur the extra expense of a formal evaluation? Evaluation may not be necessary even if it is part of the formal proposal; then again, evaluation may be important when it isn't part of the proposal. This is an individual decision that has to be made.

What aspects of the evaluation should be used by the consultant for personal self-development, and what should be used for organizational improvement? The answer to this question dictates the evaluation design, so it must be answered early in the process.

How extensive should be the efforts to insure objectivity in the evaluation process? As a professional, the consultant should be able to separate objective data from subjective data, but this is not always easy to accomplish. Positive subjective information may outweigh negative objective information in the personal interpretation process. How extensive is the consultant's ethical obligation to insure objective feedback?

INFORMATION FEEDBACK TO THE COMPANY (19)

Selective attention may become a special problem to both the

client and the consultant during the feedback process. It is human nature (no matter how professional one may be) to attend to successes and avoid failures. No political or ethical issue is present if one is not conscious of an item of information, but a special problem does develop when one is aware of certain information and contemplates the possibility of withholding it. In some situations it may be both morally and politically judicious to withhold information, but in other situations the decision is not so easy.

For example, an issue emerges when a consultant is conducting a communication audit of a bank. During the audit a key manager confidentially reports that he is looking for a different position outside the bank. This is important information. The consultant has already decided to report that this position is the hub of too much critical information, and the communication structure should be decentralized. Should the report include the recommendation that the restructuring be done immediately in the event that the incumbent were to leave? This could make the reader of the report suspicious. Confidential information creates an ethical and political problem.

Another problem may occur when the company wants more information than was initially agreed upon in the proposal. Two different tendencies may occur in this situation. First, the consultant may attempt to be an expert in all areas. It is an ego boost to have someone ask for information. The second tendency may be to withhold information that would be potentially useful so it is possible to obtain an additional contract. How and what information should be presented to the company requires that the consultant make difficult decisions.

TERMINATING THE AGREED UPON STRATEGY AND DISCUSSING FUTURE ACTIONS (20, 21)

A sense of closure is developed when the agreed upon strategy is terminated. Ethical and political issues appear when future actions are discussed before there is a sense of closure on the present strategy. When a consultant sees that certain actions need to be implemented, there may be a tendency to make them part of the present strategy rather than to make a new proposal. It is distasteful to many professionals to sell themselves; consequently, they try to "stretch" out the present contract to encompass additional

activities and never close the contract. A consulting activity may continue this way for several years.

This may be a politically expedient way to perpetuate activities, but serious questions emerge. Are both parties clear on the reason for the continued activity? Is the consultant trying to become "indispensable" to the organization? Does the organization need the consultant, or does the consultant need the organization?

Of course the other side of the situation should also be discussed. It is possible that the present strategy has been completed, but the consultant should continue with specific actions that are required. Also, the organization would like to retain the consultant because he or she is familiar with the problem and the organization. However, the consultant may not want to continue the project because it is not interesting or it requires more time and effort than initially anticipated. Does the consultant have a certain ethical and political responsibility to the client to continue with the project? The client has trusted the consultant to this point. Should the trust or respect be reciprocated?

DECIDING WHETHER TO CONTINUE OR TERMINATE THE RELATIONSHIP (22-24)

If the relationship is continued, the consultant will face many of the same issues again, only on a different level. In fact, some of the questions become even more complex as the relationship between a client and consultant grows and develops. Just as a marital relationship must go through a stage in which responsibilities are clarified and trust is developed, a client/consultant relationship must go through a stage of clarification.

If the relationship is terminated, one special issue that develops involves the use of materials prepared in one company for use in other companies. Do the materials developed for a particular client belong to that client? Even if the client does not have a use for them, does this give the consultant the right to use them with other clients? Should a consultant use a situation in one company as an example when working with another company? Even if the name is changed, future individuals may recognize the example due to the nature of the organization. If the consultant is teaching a communication class at the local university, should reference be made to the nature of the consulting in which the individual is presently engaged? May the consultant use the name of the

client when presenting the example in order to make it clearer to the class? It is necessary to determine what is confidential in the consultant/client relationship. Essentially, the question is this: "What is the responsibility of the consultant to the client when the relationship has been terminated?"

SUMMARY

The issues discussed in this article are dynamic, just as the communication process, individual consultants, and organizations are dynamic. It is literally impossible to develop principles for any one of these three variables, let alone all three in a dynamic interaction. Concrete guidelines do not fit dynamic situations. Rather than concrete guidelines, it is important to develop personal political and ethical principles. The purpose of this article has been to discuss many of the issues a consultant faces so that a personal political and ethical framework can be refined for the consulting process.

Program Deliveries

Business communication training programs can take many forms. Ultimately, consultants choose the delivery vehicle they judge most suitable for the client's needs. It would be dangerous to assume that one program delivery is superior to another; in fact, each program must be tailored to the specifications and communication climate of the client organization. Many programs, for example, can be very effective over a one- or two-day period, depending on the consultant's assessment of the communication problems. Other programs may require an extended delivery time, especially if the consultant feels that the client's problems involve fundamental abuses of grammar, punctuation, organization, attitude, and so on. In such cases time is necessary for learners to restructure the actual base of their communication, thereby eliminating the problems.

Stephen Moskey's "Delivering Corporate Training in Writing" offers many ideas for setting up multiple-week training programs. The article is a treasure of information about available books, programmed instructional aids, package courses, and other materials to consider before designing a comprehensive training program. Moskey's experience at Aetna Life and Casualty gives authority to his extensive discussion of three methods for delivering training in writing: lecture, workshop, and self-study. His insights here, plus his description of the Aetna writing programs and his suggestions for starting a corporate writing program, are required reading for any trainer.

For the external consultant Robert Gieselman's "One-Day, In-House Writing Workshop" describes a very successful approach that helps clients for whom time is not critical in the learning process. Gieselman discusses learning environment and cautions against theory-based presentations. Instead, workshops should be practical, focusing on the client's everyday needs in the workplace. Gieselman stresses the act of writing itself and the use of a great number of participants' samples. He also emphasizes the need to secure support from top management.

Problems that can occur if management and participants do not wholeheartedly engage in the communication workshop are frankly appraised in Joel Bowman/Bernadine Branchaw's "Conducting a Fifteen-Week Writing Program." They offer numerous samples (indeed, a whole program from inception to closure) including schedules, program reports, participant assessments, session evaluation forms, and cost figures. Their workshop approach uses feedback, reinforcement, and evaluation techniques in phases spread over fifteen weeks to assure maximum learning and retention.

The remaining articles survey writing, speaking, reading, and listening, seen from both business and technical perspectives. Herman Estrin's "Industry Needs College Technical Communication Instructors" encourages college instructors to "package" their academic talents for the business/technical marketplace. Estrin examines course and conference structures, as well as crucial training logistics; included are syllabi for writing, speech, and inter-

personal communication, presented in both multiple-week and two-day programs. The oral component also receives a particularly apt delivery in John Hollwitz/Eric Matthiesen's "Model Syllabus for In-House Corporate Speech Training." Recognizing that administrators and managers constitute a new population for training, Hollwitz and Matthiesen have devised a two-module workshop that pinpoints informational and persuasive strategies necessary for managers speaking to sophisticated audiences and to general interest groups. The course, team-taught with a lecture-laboratory structure, uses the Houland-Janis model, attending to the listener's attention, comprehension, and acceptance of the message.

The remainder of this section presents a number of outlines for courses in report writing, executive communication, proposal writing, and technical report writing. Finally, the Denton-Rivers selected bibliography annotates articles relevant to training, teaching methodology, and short course presentation in business, industry, and government.

Delivering Corporate Training in Writing®

Stephen T. Moskey, *Aetna Institute for Corporate Education*

Before I began writing this article, I asked myself what ABCA members might want to know about corporate training programs in writing. Working on the assumption that this volume's readership would not want a theoretical discussion, I decided to write a practical, nuts-and-bolts paper covering four areas. In this paper I: (1) describe the context of corporate training in writing, (2) describe and evaluate three methods of delivering training in writing, (3) describe the in-house programs at Aetna Life & Casualty, (4) offer some advice to anyone thinking of starting a corporate training program in writing.

THE CONTEXT OF CORPORATE WRITING PROGRAMS

The failure of schools to produce entry-level workers who can read, write, and do basic math is front-page news in this country. On January 22, 1981, the *Wall Street Journal* reported (p. 1) "Employers take over where schools failed to teach the basics: Courses in English and Math offered to help workers master their equipment." On February 18, 1981, the front page of the *Hartford Courant* reported "20 percent of city pupils failing, but may still be promoted." Clearly, a crisis situation. And it's in this context that many communities look to major corporations as the primary source of job and economic strength for their region. If corporations are to meet this social obligation, and if they are to meet their needs for competent employees, they have to set up their own training programs to finish the job begun by the school systems. Employers across the nation are doing just that.

And there's also the problem of the employee who perhaps has been with a company for a number of years, perhaps has a college education, and perhaps has some degree of stature in the company, but who writes a sentence such as: "There were no other places to

eat, buy groceries, or do laundry because the location of the motel was not ideal for these types of facilities."

The problem here is not one of literacy, but one of a lack of clarity and conciseness. Technical and managerial level employees are expected to think, solve problems, and lead people; yet their inability to communicate in writing their needs and accomplishments often frustrates these goals.

On the one hand, we have the situation of semi-literate employees who cannot function in a normal working environment which requires its employees to read, write and perform basic math. On the other hand, we have literate workers who cannot express themselves clearly or even accurately. Corporate training in writing typically focuses on both of these problems.

Training is a matter of survival to the nation's businesses and industries. Semi-literate, entry-level employees would probably be otherwise unemployable if training were not available to them once they are hired. Literate employees who cannot express themselves clearly in writing work below efficiency, and they cost their employers big money when losses due to miscommunication are totaled up. The story of the plumbing supervisor who left his workers written instructions to "cut the pipes into sixty inch-long pieces" rather than "cut the pipes into pieces 60 inches long" illustrates this point.

THREE METHODS OF DELIVERING TRAINING IN WRITING AND LANGUAGE ARTS

There are three main methods of delivering writing training in a corporate setting: (1) the lecture method, (2) the workshop method, and (3) the self-study method. The way in which lectures, workshops, and self-study courses are delivered (e.g., in-house consultant, free-lance consultant, local community college) may vary from corporation to corporation; and some courses may incorporate some features of each method. But, in general, most courses will fit into only one category.

The Lecture Method

The lecture method is information-centered. Typically, the instructor in this type of writing course attempts to convey to the students "information" about writing. The course is usually highly

structured; there is usually an outline of topics which the speaker covers by the end of the day. Often, these lectures are given in motel conference rooms with several hundred people in attendance. The role of the learner in such a course is a passive one; he is expected to absorb, digest, and apply these writing principles (usually a review of stylistic features—active/passive, business jargon—nebulous topics such as “getting started”). There is rarely any feedback from the audience. My term for this type of workshop, “one man roadshows,” conjurs up a fairly accurate image of this. And we all get circulars from organizations selling this type of nontraining in writing.

There is a major corporation in the Southern New England area which uses a somewhat related approach to teach basic language skills to its adult employees. That company has hired a high school English teacher to teach “grammar” in a traditional classroom setting. The adults sit in rows of desks and the teacher drills them on spelling, punctuation, and other language arts skills. Such instances of unenlightened pedagogy are, one hopes, very rare. But it shows the extent to which some corporations are in dire need of advice on how to deliver training in writing and language arts.

The Workshop Method

The workshop method is experience-centered. The course leader usually talks about principles of good writing, organizational techniques and editing. But then, in contrast to the writing lecture, he or she provides the participants with activities which help them learn those principles. I distinguish three types of workshops, Type A, Type B, and Type C.

Type A workshops, often taught by outside, free-lance consultants, tend to be heavily lecture-oriented with some (usually trivial) activities which “reinforce” the workshop content. One Type A workshop with which I am familiar—I’ll call it the Written Business Communications Workshop, taught by a free-lance consultant—goes to great lengths to describe cybernetics and its application to studying the process of writing and revising. The consultant also spends an inordinate amount of time on various fog indexes, why they are useful, why they are not, etc. The participants then spend an hour or so calculating the fog index of a two-page report and critiquing its format and style. Unfortunately, the workshop leader doesn’t show how improvement in writing ability (supposedly as measured by the fog index) comes about.

She also spends time on what day of the week you should mail a memo or letter, whether to use first names or initials in business communications, and why the subject line should go before the salutation rather than after it. The consultant's fee for this one-day presentation is in excess of \$1,000; but at the end of the day, little relevant learning and no improvement in writing has taken place. All one can say is that participants have some awareness of their writing needs.

William McMillen has called this type of workshop "continuing entertainment" rather than continuing education because, he says, the most important thing here is to "boost adult morale." "Most adults come away from classes, conferences and conventions without much knowledge, but feeling better about both themselves and their jobs," he writes, specifically citing writing workshops as an example.¹ We do need to make adults aware of the need for good writing, of course; but more importantly, we need to give them training, practice, and feedback.

Type B workshops are experience centered and concentrate attention on the specific needs of each participant. The workshop leader (either an in-house trainer or an outside consultant) typically provides guidance to the group as it moves through a series of varied learning experiences, each with a specific learning objective. There is a lecture component in the sense that the leader conveys ideas, principles, and directions to the participants; but this is not the way in which the participants learn. They learn by doing; and they learn by receiving feedback on what they have done.

An example of a Type B workshop is my own Aetna course, *Report Writing for Managers*. The workshop activities are built around a simulated report-writing process. The participants become a corporate committee which plans a major report for Aetna's top management. The focus is on planning the content and organization of the report. Each participant writes one or two paragraphs of the report. These are then brought together, photocopied, distributed to the participants, and the report is read and discussed. (The report usually ends up being about 15 pages of single spaced typing.) I give a complete outline of the workshop in Appendix A.

Feedback from the course leader must accompany these learning/writing activities. Such one-on-one counseling is what helps develop mature writers who have internalized the principles that produce good writing. In *Report Writing for Managers*, I evaluate and critique a writing sample from each participant before the

workshop and follow up with a detailed critique of one report anytime within three months after the report. Such feedback is essential if nascent writers are to see where their strengths and weaknesses lie. The Writing Consultants (See Appendix B) conduct Type B workshops which provide what is probably the best structured feedback of any workshop course currently available in the U.S.

Type C workshops provide in-house corporate trainers with all materials necessary to run a writing program on their own: audio and/or video cassettes, participant workbooks, and a leader's guide. Some also provide training for the trainers. These workshops often consist of several sessions, spread out over several weeks to give employees time to read, do exercises, and assimilate what they have learned. One well-publicized example of this type of workshop is *Put It in Writing*, published by the International Writing Institute, Inc. (Cleveland, Ohio 44115). Such workshops combine many of the best features of Type B workshops (i.e., there are structured learning activities) with some of the features of self-study/feedback courses (see below). A disadvantage, however, is that Type C generally does not require a specially trained workshop leader (one vendor even prides itself on not requiring users to have trained workshop leaders). In the wrong hands, such a course could be counterproductive because the workshop leader may not be able to handle questions or unusual writing problems or provide follow-up feedback to the participants.

The Self-Study Method

The self-study method is almost completely experience centered; there is usually no personal contact between the learner and an instructor. Learning takes place as a result of the individual's own initiative in completing the learning experiences provided by the course. Course activities include reading, analyzing model letters, writing answers to questions about the reading and model letters, and doing "canned" writing activities. I divide self-study courses into three types: (1) Self-Study/ No Feedback, (2) Self-Study/ Feedback, and (3) Self-Study/Tutor-assisted.

Self-Study/No Feedback. Most off-the-shelf, self-contained writing courses (often available through the mail) fit into this category. These courses are characterized by a programmed learning approach which requires the learner to write or rewrite complete sentences;

the student compares these to models or to "correct" answers. The Pictorial Publishers course, *Writing Effective Business Letters: A Programmed Instructional Text*, is an example of this (See Appendix C).

Sometimes, the course materials include an audio or video cassette which introduces the material in the workbook or manual. Through the audio-video component, the student views the video or listens to the audio cassette; she then turns to the printed material for practice in applying those principles. (Appendix D provides information on an example of this, the U.S. Insurance Group's course, *The Letter Writing Workshop*.)

Other variants of this format provide a complete package of learning materials: audio or video cassettes, workbooks, and reference materials (dictionary, thesaurus, styleguide, etc.). Learn, Inc. (Mt. Laurel, NJ 08050) produces a course, *Power Writing*, of this type. The best complete package courses, though, are probably the Time-Life Video (New York, NY 10020) productions *Writing for Work* (for administrative/clerical employees), *Writing for Executives*, and *Effective Reading* (which has a good vocabulary development component). Because *Writing for Work* and *Effective Reading* have subtle motivational themes (improving attitudes towards using good language skills on the job), they are especially attractive for corporate users.

While such courses do provide exposure to the principles of grammar and style, they are by their format limited to treating writing as a process of selecting "good" alternatives, a process of selecting one construction or expression over another. They cannot easily treat writing as a process of synthesizing, analyzing, conceptualizing, and selecting grammatical and lexical options at each stage of writing. Learning such a process requires feedback, and this feedback can only come from an experienced writing instructor. While such courses are effective in teaching mechanics (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc.), elements of style (developing good openings and closings, avoiding cliches, etc.), and good communication as an aspect of consumer relations, they are not completely effective means of teaching writing.

The lecture and self-study/no feedback courses often work on the premise that "if the student would just learn principles 1, 2, 3, . . . they'll be good writers." Unfortunately, teaching writing isn't that simple. Learning to write is a complex process which requires an energetic, well-trained instructor, receptive students with the time and inclination to do the work necessary to learn to

write well, and pedagogically-sound teaching/learning materials. We've seen that workshop type B comes close to this ideal; self-study/feedback and self-study/tutor-assisted courses come even closer.

Self-Study/Feedback. Self-study courses which have a feedback component incorporate many of the best features of both self-study and workshop courses. The student has a workbook, manual, or study guide; and there are a number of writing assignments or projects to complete in a given sequence. The student sends the assignments to an instructor who critiques and returns the assignments to the student.

I know of only three writing courses which provide this type of feedback in a self-study program: the Life Office Management Association's *Improving Written Communications* (see Appendix E) and Aetna Life & Casualty's courses *Writing for Business* and *How to Write a More Effective Letter* (See Appendix F). Such courses involve reading, doing exercises in the manual, and completing writing projects for critique by the instructor. In each module of Aetna's *Writing for Business*, for example, the student does a writing assignment and rewrites a sample of his own writing for critique. Appendix G reproduces one such writing project.

These courses exemplify the criteria for a good writing course:

1. There is time for the student to assimilate principles of writing and features of style and grammar.
2. There is a format which allows the instructor, manual, or workbook to convey a sufficient number of examples of good writing for the student to study and imitate.
3. There is time for the student to complete writing assignments or projects.
4. There is a way for the course leader or instructor to provide feedback on the student's assignments and general progress.

Self-Study/Tutor Assisted. Tutor-assisted instruction involves a learner, a textbook, manual, or other learning materials, and a tutor. The learner is responsible for mastering the content of the course; the tutor is responsible for helping that process along by guiding the student through the material. At Aetna, for example, we use tutor-assisted instruction for our language skills refresher course (two components: spelling and grammar), which has a workshop format. There are plans for expanding the language skills refresher to include basic composition. Students come

into our Learning Center for one hour a week (see the next section, "Training at Aetna Life & Casualty," for details) to take diagnostic quizzes, to listen to audio tapes which review old material and preview new material, and, if necessary, to discuss the material with the tutor.

Tutor-assisted self-study has many advantages. It combines the best aspects of self-study and workshop courses. There is time for learning to take place, there is guidance from an instructor, and there is time for learning activities (i.e., "homework") to reinforce the writing and language skills learned. The cost of such instruction, however, is high (tutors, equipment, materials, space, etc.); and only large companies with established training and education programs usually select this mode of instruction.

TRAINING AT AETNA LIFE AND CASUALTY

At Aetna we currently have five in-house programs in what we call our "writing continuum," a progression of courses beginning with remedial language skills and ending with an advanced seminar for executives. We've designed the continuum so that employees enter the program at the level which corresponds either to their proficiency in language arts/writing or to their job in the company (e.g., there is a course specifically for supervisors). They then progress through a series of increasingly more advanced courses. I summarize the five courses in the continuum in Figure 1. At the risk of sounding gimmicky, we like to look at the quality of our language arts and business writing programs from the perspective of what we call the three Aetna R's: relevance, results, and retention.

Relevance at Aetna means that we use appropriate books and materials as the basis for our courses and that the right student gets into the right program. We carefully review new textbooks and programs, pilot them with actual students, and evaluate the pre- and post-test scores of those pilot-group students before we decide whether or not a particular textbook or program is appropriate. Most off-the-shelf programs have to be adapted to our needs and the needs of our students (for example, creating study units out of a regular textbook). When employees apply for a particular course, we make sure that it meets their needs. For example, someone who applies for our self-study *Writing for Business* course, yet who is deficient in spelling and grammar, will

Course	Audience	Learning Approach	Duration	Textbook
Language Skills Refresher (Spelling and Grammar)	All employees (generally entry-level through low-level technicals)	Workshop with self-study and tutor assistance	10 weeks	<i>Instant Spelling Power</i> (1) <i>Practically Painless English</i> (2)
Writing for Business	All employees with good language skills (generally mid-level technicals through middle management)	Self-study; written feedback on assignments	1-5 months	<i>Writing for Business I-V</i> (published by Aetna Life & Casualty)
Effective Letter-writing	All Aetna Field Office employees (mid-level technicals)	Self-study; written feedback on assignments	3 months average	<i>How to Write a More Effective Letter</i> (published by Aetna Life & Casualty)
Editing for Supervisors	All Aetna Supervisors	Workshop; team activities	½ day	<i>How to be Your Own Best Editor</i> (published by Aetna Life & Casualty)
Report Writing for Managers	Managers (mid-level and above)	Workshop; team activities, lecture, writing samples	1 day	<i>Style: Ten Lessons . . .</i> (3)

(1) Norman Lewis, *Instant Spelling Power*, New York: AMSCO College Publications (1973).

(2) Sally F. Wallace, *Practically Painless English*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall (1980).

(3) Joseph Williams, *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace*, Glenview: Scott, Foresman (1981). Supplemental reference text; not used during the workshop.

FIGURE 1
IN-HOUSE WRITING COURSES AT AETNA LIFE AND CASUALTY

be counseled to take the Language Skills Refresher first. We place students in the appropriate level by assessing their background, skill level, and current job requirements.²

Results of the instruction are monitored carefully in the Language Skills Refresher—we pre- and post-test each student. Each student's performance on the tests is logged into a recordkeeping system; and from this system we produce monthly, quarterly, and yearly reports on the effectiveness of each course and of each trainer. These reports record our performance as trainers. The testing and recordkeeping procedures are constant checks on that performance: the statistics force us to be accountable for our results.

Retention can really be summed up as the contrast between the Aetna student who says at the end of a course "I can spell" and the student elsewhere who says "I've had spelling." We teach skills that will carry students through their Aetna careers and beyond. Although we do not do retention testing on a regular basis, we will, from time to time, have a student return several weeks after completing the course to take another post-test. Because this is done only occasionally, I have no figures to show measurement of actual retention over long periods. The tutors tell me, though, that the results of this testing, when it is done, are always good. And some of our writing programs are sequential (for example, the language skills refresher course and the self-study course *Writing for Business*), so we are able to follow some students' progress over several months or longer. In these instances, we have a chance to monitor retention on an informal basis as a student goes through an extended sequence of instruction.

ON STARTING A CORPORATE TRAINING PROGRAM IN WRITING

Training needs vary from one corporation to the next. And each corporation has its own training style. If you're starting a new writing program, you'll have to select training personnel, learning materials, and delivery methods which match your organization's education goals and training budget.

In what follows, I sketch a number of points to remember as you set up (or think about setting up) a training program in writing and language arts.

Set Goals

Start out with a set of clearly-defined goals for your program. These goals should be stated in terms of the types of learners you'll be dealing with, their pre-training competencies, and the competencies you expect them to achieve at the conclusion of training. Once you've done this, you'll be in a better position to match specific programs and materials to your students.

Start Modestly

Training in writing, if it meets the criteria set out below, is costly. The adage that you get what you pay for is true here. However, a high-priced course does not automatically assure quality; and many bad courses are very expensive. Don't attempt to put together a complete offering of writing courses at once. Review your goals, set priorities, and select the one or two most pressing needs and begin there. Aetna's writing continuum, for example, has evolved gradually over the past seven years.

Select Training Personnel Carefully

Some large corporations employ a full-time writing consultant to manage their writing and language arts programs. Although this is costly, it probably saves money in the long run because the consultant, as a full-time employee of the company, has the interests of the corporation at heart. As a writing professional, such a staff member can evaluate and select (or contract for) training personnel and materials which meet the needs, match the style, and are within the training budget of the company.

Companies not large enough to do this should be extremely careful when they hire a free-lance consultant. Word is out that there's plenty of money to be made selling writing consulting and training services to companies that do not have in-house expertise in these areas. The quality of some writing consultants is so bad that one consulting firm actually states in its brochure that "we're not moonlighting college professors, or all-purpose consultants who've suddenly discovered the market for writing purposes. *All* we do is teach business people to write. . . ." (Burger Associates, Glen Mill, PA 19342). In her article "Choosing the Right Writing Consultant: Twelve Questions to Consider"³ Minerva Neiditz puts this issue on the line. Any company thinking of hiring a writing consultant should read Neiditz' article.⁴

Select (or Develop) Programs Carefully

A writing program, whether bought off-the-shelf, delivered by a free-lance consultant, or developed in-house, should meet the following minimal qualifications:

1. The program should provide time for students to assimilate the material. (This eliminates most one-day, one-shot quickie courses.)

2. The learning materials should include many good examples of good writing and should teach students how to analyze and imitate them.

3. The course leader should assign writing projects to be collected at a later time for review and critique by the leader. This follow-up feedback is crucial if any improvement in writing is to occur.

4. The course should employ a variety of learning activities and learning modes: reading, writing, reviewing, analyzing, etc.

5. The course materials should be professional looking, be geared toward learning—not entertainment—and be suited to the needs of the learner.

Don't Look for Quick Solutions

Developing and setting up a new program in writing or language arts takes time. It may take as long as six to twelve months of careful research and planning just to get a program going, even using off-the-shelf programs or books. It will probably take upwards of two years if you develop in-house materials using your own writing consultant. At Aetna, for example, we began developing our *Writing for Business* course in 1978; the preliminary edition came out in early 1980; and the finished product came out in early 1981.

There are no easy solutions to the problems of delivering corporate training in writing. Most consultants and training firms tell you they have easy solutions. Some of them do, in fact, have very good programs. But how do you know? Listen for realistic assessments of your company's writing problems. Avoid consultants who sell "overnight" solutions—learning to write well takes time and practice. Above all, make sure the programs you buy or develop meet the writing needs of your corporation—and of your employees.

APPENDIX A

Program Outline for Reporting Writing for Managers (Ætna Life and Casualty, Hartford, CT 06156)

- I. PREWORK
 - A. Submit one sample report to course leader
 - B. Prepare case study for simulated reporting situation
- II. PLANNING YOUR REPORT
 - A. Analyzing your audience
 - B. Establishing your purpose
- III. ORGANIZING YOUR MATERIAL
 - A. Gathering
 - B. Organizing
 - C. Grouping
- IV. ESTABLISHING FACT/ANALYSIS/
CONCLUSION PATTERNS
 - A. Relating
 - B. Interpreting
 - C. Evaluating
- V. WRITING THE FIRST DRAFT
- VI. REVISING THE DRAFT
 - A. Compressing
 - B. Deleting
 - C. Adding
 - D. Style
- VII. EVALUATING THE FINAL DRAFT
- VIII. REPORT FORMATS
 - A. Pyramid
 - B. Traditional
 - C. Numbering Systems
- IX. FOLLOW-UP
 - Critique of one report within three months of the workshop.

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APPENDIX B

Program Outline

The Writing Consultants
Chestnut Hill
Litchfield, CT 06759
(203) 567-9130

Workshop I

Straightforward writing without jargon
Brevity—chopping away deadwood
Simplicity—the “Plain English Dictionary”
Clarity—saying what you mean
Tones of voice
Force—concrete words, especially vivid nouns and verbs

Workshop II

Logic—claims, evidence, and rationales
Order—arranging topics through such principles of order as complexity, relevance, and chronology
Visual structure—shapes that guide the reader’s eye

Workshop III

The participants discuss pieces of their own writing that they have revised.
Participants will have six before-and-after samples ready for peer review.

Workshop IV

Review of revisions. Further exercises if necessary.

Follow-up

For one month participants can send us samples of their latest writing. We will comment on each piece and return it. After that month we will meet each participant for a half-hour discussion and review.

Individual Problems

At every session we focus on individual work, individual questions, and individual problems. If one writer must write to nontechnical audiences about technical subjects while another must persuade readers to act, we pursue those different problems

not only within the workshop but also in individual conferences when necessary. (If participants have special difficulties with grammar, punctuation, or spelling, we set up ways to cope with these difficiencies.)

NO CLIENT IS THE SAME
NO PARTICIPANT IS THE SAME. . .
SO NO WORKSHOP IS THE SAME

A Typical Workshop

Size: 10 participants in a workshop

Method: One month before the workshop begins, we receive five writing samples from each participant. From these samples we construct exercises and choose pieces for the participants to discuss and revise. Participants meet four times, once a week, for two and one-half hours with a one-month follow-up period and a half-hour individual follow-up session.

Handouts and Exercises: After analyzing writing samples, we provide participants with handouts and exercises designed to meet their needs.

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APPENDIX C

Sample Frame from *Writing Effective Business Letters: A Programmed Instructional Text* (Pictorial Publishers, Inc., Indianapolis, IN 46268).

BEGIN WITH A PERTINENT QUESTION. This approach to opening letters is used to clarify a problem or question. The following is an example:

“Do you have a copy of the new Homeowners Policy?”

Write a “pertinent question” opening to an agent to find out the age of an applicant.

Answer:

Your sentence should look something like this:

How old is the applicant?

or

Do you know how old the applicant is?

or

Could you find out the age of the applicant?

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APPENDIX D

Brief Description of *The Letter Writing Workshop* (U.S. Insurance Group, 305 Madison Avenue, Morristown, New Jersey 07690).*

The Letter Writing Workshop, produced by Crum & Forster Corporation, is designed to assist anyone who writes (or dictates) business letters or memos. The program, which is completely self-instructional, demonstrates how the warmth and sincerity of face-to-face communication can be captured in the written word.

The workshop consists of six individual lessons on two video-cassettes; a leader's guide (for a training coordinator); and twenty-five workbooks (exercises to be completed with the video instruction). Good and bad examples focus on the insurance industry; however, the guidelines, suggestions, and techniques recommended apply equally well to *any* business writing situation.

The video/workbook format permits individualized instruction and enables participants to view and review program materials as often as necessary.

Lesson I: Tone

Points out the importance of the "you attitude" and explains why negative words and phrases should be avoided.

Lesson II: Clarity

Details eight rules for more understandable communications.

Lesson III: Conciseness

Demonstrates how sentence structure can be tightened and how clichés and redundancies can be avoided.

Lesson IV: Opening Sentence

Provides tips on how to attract attention, arouse immediate interest and create a positive tone.

Lesson V: Organization

Explains several ways of organizing to gain a reader's attention.

Lesson VI: Closing Sentences

Tells how to develop a strong close.

*Excerpted from U.S. Insurance Group's promotional brochure for this course. Used by permission.

APPENDIX E

Description of *Improving Written Communications* (Life Office Management Association, Atlanta, GA 30361).

Module I: Toward Better Grammar

Program Length: 10 weeks

Approach: Six instructional units will guide this student through a review of the basics in grammar, punctuation, style, and word usage.

By taking self-administered, self-checking exercises throughout the module, the student will apply what she has learned and will be able to pinpoint areas requiring special attention.

To measure a student's progress and achievement, LOMA evaluates three full-length exercises that she completes at the beginning, middle and end of the module.

Contents:

1. Parts of Speech
2. Sentences
3. Objects, Verbs and Verbals
4. Style
5. Punctuation
6. Usage

Module II: Effective Letter Writing

Program Length: 12 weeks

Approach: Students receive six easy-to-read units with exercises to finish and correct as they study the principles and techniques of effective letter writing.

Students also send a series of complete writing assignments to their own evaluator who returns individualized assessments of the work, along with suggestions for improving letter-writing skills. The same evaluator works with the student during the entire 12-week program, checking each of her assignments, getting to know her personal writing style and answering her questions.

Each evaluation is returned to the student before the next assignment is due so he can apply the knowledge he gains to subsequent assignments. Besides commenting on the individual

unit assignments, the evaluator will prepare mid-session and final progress reports for the student and his supervisor.

To fit job responsibilities, writing assignments have been developed with ordinary, group and health insurance areas in mind. The student has the opportunity to analyze insurance industry letters similar to the kind he writes on the job.

Contents:

1. Planning Your Writing
2. Clarity
3. Being Courteous
4. Being Positive
5. Being Concise
6. Putting It All Together

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APPENDIX F

A Brief Description of *Writing for Business* (Aetna Life & Casualty)

Objective: To help employees develop a clear, concise conversational style of business writing.

Designed For: Employees at any job level who write an average of three letters, memos, or reports a week.

Content: The course is divided into five parts. Each part develops and reinforces writing concepts in a specific area, using examples taken from actual Aetna correspondence:

- Sentences and paragraphs
- Transitions and connections
- Organization and flow
- Tone
- How to be your own best editor

A writing consultant analyzes the participant's writing, and the individual is enrolled in the necessary part or parts. Each employee's program will be specifically designed to help develop areas in which his/her writing skills are weak.

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APPENDIX G

Sample Writing Project from *Writing for Business* (Aetna Life & Casualty).

MASTERY TEST

The importance of planning will become very clear to you as you read this poorly-organized memo. Reorganize it in a more logical way, arranging the ideas more sensibly and grouping related thoughts together. You will probably need to rewrite some sentences as you rearrange others. Make whatever changes you feel will help the memo flow more logically.

Aetna INTEROFFICE COMMUNICATION

TO Jennifer Lee, Training Coordinator, Consumer Relations

FROM Nicholas Santos, Training Consultant

DATE December 5, 1980

SUBJECT NEW COURSE

This is a 12 week course (1, 3 hour session weekly).

This program is designed to assist new salespeople to learn how to deal with practical business problems, and how to use established sales techniques. Class size is usually 10-12 persons.

The program utilizes a variety of teaching aides, including videotapes. It has been developed by the National Purchasing Council and focuses on:

- 1 — developing salesmanship
- 2 — developing insight into corporate purchasing procedures

I have attended the course and think it's excellent. We could easily use our present classrooms — they already have the equipment we will need to run this program. Getting people to enroll shouldn't be any problem either.

This would require no fewer than two instructors per session — which equals at least 24 bodies unless some of these instructors agree to conduct more than one session. Of course, this program would be free to participants. I'd like to investigate the feasibility of our department underwriting the cost of about \$85 per student enrolled.

I am respectfully requesting that you implement this program by:

- 1 — sponsoring it for new salespeople in the Hartford area (at least at first)
- 2 — assuring that the instructors are available
- 3 — issue certificates at graduation ceremony

Hope to hear favorably from you on this soon.

P.S. Attached is workbook for your perusal.

Now rewrite this memo and your own writing sample _____ (typewritten if possible), and send them to Program Coordinator, Writing for Business, Human Resources, Home Office, by _____.

NOTES

1. "Don't Make Them Laugh, Make Them Learn," *Training/HRD*, (February 1981), p. 82.
2. Two related seminars are offered through Aetna's Management and Executive Education Department: Business Writing Workshop and Technical Writing Workshop. These are not, however, writing workshops as I define them in this article; and they are not associated in any way with the Writing Programs Unit, which I head. Rather, they teach general principles of communication in business and technical environments and serve to sensitize people to the need for learning to write clearly and concisely.
3. *Northeast Training News* (June 1981), pp. 17/20.
4. Ernest Mazzatenta (Technical Information Department, General Motors Research Laboratories, Warren, Michigan 48090) has written the first comprehensive profile of technical and business communication instructors. His 1981, 110-page report, "A Profile of In-House Teachers of Technical Information," is based on questionnaires sent to a cross-section of trainers and consultants in business and industry.

The One-Day, In-House Writing Workshop

Robert D. Gieselman, *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

This is a report on experience gained over several years of conducting one-day workshops for several different business firms. It describes a practical, how-to-do-it approach and pays little attention to matters theoretical. It covers such basics as workshop physical setup and atmosphere, how to begin, coverage, use of writing samples, and provides numerous realistic tips for putting on a successful program. Although this approach may not work in every situation, we* believe it is a workable approach which will serve the writing needs of most business firms.

WORKSHOP SETUP AND ATMOSPHERE

We believe good physical facilities are necessary, of course; but even more vital is the right kind of atmosphere. A few suggestions about each are in order.

In addition to enough room to accommodate 20-25 people without crowding, all you need are a small table for transparencies and handouts, an overhead projector and screen (or light-colored wall), and a chalkboard. It's best if the training or conference room is furnished with tables so the participants have plenty of surface for writing the exercises and other assignments. You might even want to designate part of the room as a nonsmoking area.

You don't need a lectern; in fact, you're better off without one. Lecterns bespeak formal classroom procedures with the teacher doing most of the talking. And that's the kiss of death. To foster rapport and participation, avoid formal lectures. Instead, simply move about and talk with the group—not at them.

Encourage them to interrupt with comments and questions. Assure them you don't mind being flagged down once in a while; then be careful to handle the interruptions tactfully.

Be personal: recognize students by name, first name preferably. This part is easy: just use name cards. If none are available, ask the

*The "we" in this article refers to my colleague, Francis W. Weeks, with whom I have taught several of these workshops.

participants to take a sheet of paper from their notebooks, write their names in large letters, and make a tent fold. This doesn't take even a minute and will help you get the degree of easy informality you want. Remember, this is not a lecture—it's a workshop.

GETTING STARTED

Any successful presentation should have an introduction. So, too, with the one-day workshop. We share this job. One of us introduces the two of us, with brief comments on who we are, our credentials, and with perhaps a humorous personal note. This establishes our credibility while presenting us as sensible, humane people—not ivory-tower pedants. Then, the other of us introduces the subject matter of the workshop, mentioning what we plan to cover and how we plan to do it. At about this point we thank them for providing us with samples of their writing and assure them that they'll soon get them back with comments from each of us. We also present the workshop objectives during this phase. All of this requires perhaps twenty minutes.

Another useful introductory activity is to ask participants to identify themselves briefly. This you would not need to do when the participants already know each other. When you're working in a large company, however, they may in fact be unacquainted; in these cases, they are interested in knowing who else is in the class, what departments are represented, and what levels of the organization are represented. If we ask the students to introduce themselves, we also ask them to tell us and the group what they consider to be their most troublesome writing problem.

During this segment, which takes ten minutes or so, one of us conducts the session and the other takes notes. Then, during the wrapup, we refer to these notes to be sure we have addressed each of their concerns. Typical concerns are style, wordiness, beginning and ending different kinds of messages, grammar and punctuation, adapting to readers, writing effective negative messages, writing for somebody else's signature, supervising others' writing, conveying technical information to nontechnical audiences, and so on. Nothing new perhaps but of concern to them.

Keep general introductory remarks brief. Suppress the urge to discuss at great length the importance of good writing or its costs and savings potential. No doubt you are well informed and enthusiastic. Who cares? You'll be preaching to the converted. Don't

present any models or theories of communication. Simply introduce the topic crisply and then get on with it.

COVERAGE

In a one-day writing workshop there is absolutely no time for communication theory *per se*. Don't present Shannon's model—or any model. If you do, be sure to leave a wake-up call. Nothing will kill a class quicker than dusty theoretical concepts. Such things are all right in their place, but this sort of workshop isn't the place. The emphasis should be on practical matters. The central guideline is this: what do they need in order to solve everyday problems through effective writing?

To help them improve their effectiveness, we try to cover:

1. Message planning
2. Style, language, readability
3. Grammar and punctuation (brief review)
4. Visual impact
5. Adaptation
6. Reader psychology
7. Persuasion
8. Negative messages
9. Their specific writing problems

Beyond this, we spend about half the roughly seven contact hours on critiques of their writing samples and on workshop exercises. In addition to various word and sentence exercises, they write at least three complete (if brief) messages—informative, persuasive, and negative—and read aloud parts of their work.

The key is variety. We shift fairly often between subject matter areas and alternate workshop leaders. Rarely is either of us conducting for more than 45 minutes at a stretch. Whichever one of us is not “on stage” often prowls about making suggestions and giving encouragement to individuals as they write.

USING PARTICIPANTS' WRITING SAMPLES

Nothing we do is so personal, immediately related, and effective as discussing participants' own writing. No amount of sterile, made-up (or borrowed) sentence or paragraph exercises can do as much good as samples from their own work-related writing. We use these in two ways.

First, we request at least two sample letters, memos, or short reports from each participant several days before the program. After we receive these by mail we photocopy them and each instructor writes comments on his copy. They are returned to their authors early in the session. Not unexpectedly, our comments don't always agree. We do them separately and rarely compare notes. In practice our comments turn out to be more alike than different. Writing positive, helpful comments takes quite a lot of time, but they can help you lay a foundation and they reach employees personally.

The second way we use their writing is by projecting several samples onto a screen for discussion and analysis. They love that. We suggest two cautions. Be sure in advance what you want the samples to illustrate, how you want them to fit with the rest of your program. Also, omit writers' names. This avoids embarrassment and hurt feelings. Anonymity is not essential, of course, and an experienced instructor can discuss identified writing tactfully, especially if the discussion is preceded by a general comment that the writing samples displayed are not necessarily bad and that all comments are intended to be constructive. You can do it either way, but we think you'll fare better if you delete names before making the transparencies.

A recurrent comment on our evaluation forms is, "Should have had more discussion of our writing samples." Even though we spend considerable time on this, it seems they never get enough.

GRAMMAR, PUNCTUATION, AND SPELLING

Business executives frequently lament the lack of writing ability of today's college graduate. (They have little room to talk: most of them don't write as well as our students.) When pressed for specifics, they refer almost without exception to poor grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Many are keenly conscious of their own deficiencies—real or imagined—in these basic areas. They perceive a need, they want help.

We rarely agree that their own grammar is horrible. Granted, it may be imperfect, but weakness in grammar is not their chief problem in writing; in fact, it is pretty far down the list. To spend even one-quarter of the day reviewing grammar would be taking money under false pretenses; yet it cannot be ignored.

We recommend that it be dealt with quite openly for perhaps

twenty to thirty minutes. Explain to the group that their grammar really is not bad, that extensive knowledge of grammatical nomenclature is not necessary, and that several other matters are of greater importance. Convey to them that much of their early training was probably ill-conceived or even wrong. Give some examples of this—split infinitives, ending sentences with prepositions, starting sentences with conjunctions. Stress that some grammatical “rules” are indeed important—subject-verb agreement, pronoun reference, and parallel structure, for example. In fact, we have a handout with two columns of grammatical shibboleths: things to remember and things to forget.

Deal briefly with the subject. Give the students perspective by putting grammar in its place, shattering a few icons, and liberating them from the vile and misbegotten servitude thrust upon them during their school days. Then go on to something important.

NOTEBOOKS

We provide (at the client's expense) three-ring binders full of handouts of various kinds. We can efficiently refer to appropriate page numbers as we go along. Each participant has a permanent reference work to take back to the office which is both a tangible product of the session and a source of information for further study. The notebooks contain how-to-do-it outlines, exercises, sample letters and memos, checklists, and a few short articles.

The last page is a short bibliography which we call the “Basic Bookshelf for Business Communication” (Appendix A). It includes citations, grouped under appropriate headings, of eleven standard references. We suggest during the closing minutes of the workshop that participants should obtain some or all of these books or ask their company libraries to do so; then they can really begin the study for which we have done the groundwork. They appreciate the suggested reading and, we hear, even do it.

TOP MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

When you are engaged to do an in-house program, you presumably have some management support—or you wouldn't have been hired in the first place. Yet, it is wise to stress to the group that the company's management has made a strong commitment to

improving the company's written communications. Ideally, of course, top and middle management representatives should attend, too, at some point. This is important to the support your ideas will get after the workshop is over.

We often hear this plaintive cry: "I agree with what you're teaching us and I want to do it but my boss would never let me write this way." All we can do is sympathize. We suggest first of all that bosses may be much more amenable to helpful change than employees realize. For the real hardcases, we recommend that they share our handouts with bosses, that they change their habits gradually, and "bore from within." In our experience most supervisors are more receptive to changes in writing than employees think they are.

Another way to get the essential support from the top is to offer—in long-term, repeat workshop arrangements—a capsule "pre-seminar" for top executives. This serves several useful purposes:

1. You get personal exposure and get to know and be known by top executives.
2. You can re-educate top managers under the pretext of acquainting them with what their employees will learn.
3. You stimulate immediate and long-range support.

SOME FINAL SUGGESTIONS

A few final tips:

1. At some point during the presentation of style, show them transparencies of excerpts from their company's ads or annual reports. Almost always written by experts, these pieces of writing provide examples of high-quality style. They allow you to make general points about writing style, to demonstrate that the company pays for good writing, and to convey the idea that you are well informed about their company. It can be a useful few minutes.

2. Work to get them involved in writing and reacting to writing. One of the most difficult tasks is to convey the reality of a human reader judging and reacting to their written messages. One way to achieve this awareness is by using cases derived from company writing contexts. Have them write solutions and read all or part aloud. Call on people by name and ask for specific reactions. Participation is increased and sensitivity heightened.

3. Offer to be a resource for them after the workshop. Invite them to call or write if they encounter a difficult writing problem. A few will take you up on it and you'll get some interesting cases and problems for your classes.

4. Keep a sense of humor. Business communication isn't as fascinating to most people as it is to us. It can quickly become deadly dull. An occasional relevant anecdote or transparency of a funny letter or memo is entirely appropriate. Keep it brief and related to the subject at hand.

5. How much should you charge? That's up to you. How much value do you place on your professional services? How much travel time is involved? How much preparation time? We believe \$50 per employee is quite a bargain for the company and reasonable compensation for us.

You have our permission to try any or all of these suggestions. We think they will work for you. If you do try them, let us know what happens. Good hunting.

APPENDIX A

The Basic Bookshelf for Business Communication

On Style, Usage, and English Mechanics:

Wm. Strunk, Jr. and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style*, Macmillan Publishing Co., 866 Third Avenue, NY 10022, 3rd ed., 1979, 85 pp.

John C. Hodges and Mary E. Whitten, *Harbrace College Handbook*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, NY, 9th ed., 1982, 586 pp. clothbound.

Business Communication—General (letters, reports, memos, directives):

C. W. Wilkinson, Peter B. Clarke, and Dorothy C. Wilkinson, *Communicating Through Letters and Reports*, Richard D. Irwin, Inc., Homewood, IL, 8th ed., 1983, 720 pp., clothbound.

Francis W. Weeks and Daphne Jameson, *Principles of Business Communication*, Stipes Publishing Co., Champaign, IL, 2nd ed., 1982, 309 pp., paper.

On Technical Writing:

Kenneth W. Houp and Thomas E. Pearsall, *Reporting Technical Information*, Glencoe Press, Beverly Hills, CA, 3rd ed., 1977, 473 pp., paper.

On Report Writing:

Raymond V. Lesikar, *Report Writing for Business*, Richard D. Irwin, Inc., Homewood, IL, 6th ed., 1981, 395 pp. clothbound.

On Communication and Organizational Behavior:

William V. Haney, *Communication and Interpersonal Relations*, Richard D. Irwin, Inc., Homewood, IL, 4th ed., 1979, 637 pp., clothbound.

On Listening:

Dominick A. Barbara, *How To Make People Listen To You*, Charles C. Thomas, Publishers, Springfield, IL, 1971.

On Reading:

Harvey Weiner and Charles Bazerman, *Reading Skills Handbook*, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1977.

On Clear Writing and Clear Thinking:

Monroe C. Beardsley, *Thinking Straight—Principles of Reasoning for Readers and Writers*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 4th ed., 1975, 356 pp., paper.

Lionel Ruby and Robert E. Yarber, *The Art of Making Sense*, J.B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, 3rd ed., 1974, 185 pp., paper.

Conducting a Fifteen-Week Writing Program

Joel P. Bowman and Bernadine P. Branchaw, *Western Michigan University*

In 1979, the training director of a major division of BIG, Inc., a Fortune 100 company, invited us to submit a proposal for a writing skills program that would have a lasting impact on the participants. The training director felt that the problem with most writing skills seminars and workshops is that, while participants may learn a few rules in a day or two, the skills taught are forgotten quickly because it is easier to revert to old habits than to continue working to master new skills.

In conversation with the training director, we agreed to submit a proposal for a writing skills program that would provide participants with enough directed practice to reinforce their improvements. The following materials, supplemented by our comments, provide a history of the resulting 15-week writing program. For obvious reasons, we have changed the names of the company, training director, and participants. Everything else remains the same.

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL AND PROPOSAL

Because we knew the training director well, we wrote an informal letter to accompany our proposal. We later learned that this letter stayed with the proposal as it was transmitted up the chain of command in BIG. Were we to do it over, we would be more formal to ensure being taken seriously by management in BIG. We have used the same basic proposal on several occasions with good results. All dollar amounts are 1979 figures, and our fees for similar work now would be higher.

COMMUNICATION UNLIMITED
809 Weaver Avenue
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007

Joel P. Bowman, Ph.D.
(616) 345-2740
Bernadine P. Branchaw, Ed.D.
(616) 344-7761

27 August 1979

Mr. David R. Dawson
BIG, Inc.
Data Division
908 Hanover Drive
Santa Monica, CA 90402

Here, David,

is the proposal you requested covering the writing skills improvement program for BIG, Data Division.

The proposal covers all the aspects we discussed at lunch while you were in Kalamazoo, and our estimate of the costs involved for the comprehensive program was close. With 25 participants, the fee and materials come to about \$105 for each participant.

We think that the program is a good one. It does about everything a writing program should do (except shoot the worst student in each class) and provides the kind of follow-up that should ensure lasting improvement in writing skills.

Let us know what you think.

Write soon,



Joel P. Bowman



Bernadine P. Branchaw

enc

FIGURE 1
COVER LETTER

COMMUNICATION UNLIMITED

809 Weaver Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

PROPOSAL

To improve writing skills at BIG, Inc., Data Division

Summary

Because extended practice and evaluation are essential to effect significant and lasting improvement in writing skills, we propose the following 15-week program.

1. A pretest consisting of about five pages of writing from each participant to be evaluated before the workshop.
2. A two-day workshop presenting the fundamentals of communication and providing participants opportunities to practice writing skills and to evaluate their own skills and those of others.
3. Ten follow-up assignments allowing participants the opportunity to apply the concepts under supervision.
4. A one-day follow-up workshop reviewing concepts and evaluating progress.

Problem

Difficulties caused by poor written communication in business are common, and no one writes perfectly every time. While the exact need for improvement in written communication cannot be determined without a pretest, everyone's writing skills can be improved.

The purpose of the program will be to effect measurable improvement in the participants' abilities to

1. Communicate clearly in writing.
2. Write quickly and easily.
3. Analyze a communication situation from the reader's point of view.
4. Structure written messages for greatest effectiveness.
5. Use language and psychological principles to achieve reader empathy and motivation.

Proposed Writing Program

The best way to effect measurable and lasting improvement in writing skills is through extended exposure to techniques, repeated practice, and continuing evaluation. We recommend the following schedule.

Week 1: Pretest

Each participant should submit 3-5 pages of actual, on-the-job writing for evaluation. Materials should be selected at random (rather than prepared especially for the test) to ensure an accurate determination of skill level.

Week 3: Workshop

A two-day workshop will afford participants sufficient exposure, practice, and evaluation to develop the concern necessary for measurable results.

1st day

- 8:30- 9:00 Registration
- 9:00- 9:30 Review of pretest and explanation of workshop format
- 9:30-10:30 Audience, purpose, and message structures
- 10:30-10:45 Break
- 10:45-12:00 Elements of effective communication: clarity, courtesy, conciseness
- 12:00- 1:30 Lunch (recommend dining as a group away from workshop area)
- 1:30- 3:00 Elements of effective communication: confidence, correctness, conversational tone
- 3:00- 3:15 Break
- 3:15- 5:00 Application, exercises, and assignments

2nd day

- 8:30- 9:00 Coffee and rolls
- 9:00-10:30 Routine messages: letters and memos
- 10:30-10:45 Break
- 10:45-12:00 Negative messages: letters and reports
- 12:00- 1:30 Lunch
- 1:30- 3:00 Persuasive messages: letters, memos, and proposals
- 3:00- 3:15 Break
- 3:15- 5:00 Application, exercises, and assignments

Weeks 4-14

Participants will submit ten weekly writing samples for evaluation. These should be photocopies of letters, memos, reports, or proposals written on the job. Materials will be evaluated and returned promptly.

Week 15: Workshop

A one-day follow-up workshop will help participants, BIG, Inc., Data Division, and us measure writing improvement and evaluate the program.

Activities

- 8:30- 9:00 Registration, coffee, and rolls
- 9:00- 9:30 Questions and comments
- 9:30-10:30 Review

10:30-10:45	Break
10:45-12:00	Summary of evaluations, pretest, and weekly assignments
12:00- 1:30	Lunch
1:30- 3:00	Tips and shortcuts
3:00- 3:15	Break
3:15- 4:30	The public relations of written communication
4:30- 5:00	Evaluations and certificates of achievement

Program Administration and Costs

Drs. Joel P. Bowman and Bernadine P. Branchaw will assume responsibility for the pretest, the workshops, and the evaluation of weekly materials. With a workshop size of 25 or fewer, the fee for these functions would be \$2,250 plus expenses while traveling and conducting the workshops.

Additional workshop expenses would include

1. A textbook for each participant: *Understanding and Using Communication in Business* by Bowman and Branchaw, Canfield Press, \$8.95.
2. A workbook containing concepts, examples, exercises, and problems. Photomaster, \$50; copies in house or at our cost.

At each of the steps along the way, we would inform you of the participants' skill levels and progress. We would submit four reports at the following intervals.

1. 2nd week, covering the results of the pretest.
2. 4th week, covering the two-day workshop.
3. 10th week, covering weekly assignments.
4. 16th week, summarizing the program and its results.

FIGURE 2 PROPOSAL

PRETEST

After the proposal was accepted and a place and time selected for the initial workshop, we received a list of participants and began receiving pretest materials. We encountered our first problem at this point. We did not receive writing samples from everyone on our list, and not all the samples we received were from people whose names were on the list.

The following letters represent the participants' quality of writing at the time of the pretest. We marked each letter and noted common mistakes.

December 11, 1978

To: Elanie Oetter

From: Blaine Celler

Subject: Saturday Service

Tone
This is the second time we have experienced a loss of time and communication through the Answering Service.

I don't feel we are getting adequate service. We need acknowledgement of our call. We want to be sure someone is aware of our problem and know what they intend to do about it. Can we expect a better response in the future? *agv*

BS:lc
7

FIGURE 3
SAMPLE OF PARTICIPANT'S WORK

March 5, 1980

7/21 Rose H. Montague
c/o RCK Legal Services
8040 Forest Drive
Detroit, Michigan 48202

RE: Andrew Turner, Jr.

Dear Ms. Montague:

oblivious
about
We have received your recent communication regarding your client's credit information contained in our records. We will investigate the disputed items and send Mr. Turner a revised copy of his credit file showing the changes, if any, in the near future. *MOD*

A charge off is an account that is seriously delinquent and removed from regular files. Special procedures are usually required for payment. When paid in full, the records are correct ^{ed} to read paid, was a charge off. ^{which has been} _{ed}

The information reported by the General Maintenance Shops reads paid collection account. This rating is also used for accounts that have been an insurance claim or an education claim and subsequently paid. _{Tense}

check ending

If you have any other questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at the number listed above.

Sincerely,

Deidre Gibbons
CONSUMER RELATIONS
SUPERVISOR

DEG/mt

FIGURE 4 SAMPLE OF PARTICIPANT'S WORK

TWO-DAY WORKSHOP

The two-day workshop took place in a conference room at a major Chicago-area hotel. Of the 20 or so participants present at the first day of the two-day workshop, we had received pretest materials for 19. Participants there had come from offices in Detroit, Chicago, St. Louis, and Dallas. We did not receive pretest materials from one participant, and three of the people listed as participants (who had not sent pretest materials) did not show.

Several of those present were attending not because they wanted to but because they had been "ordered" to do so by their area managers (none of whom attended). Those people, plus two or three others who felt that their writing skills were already good enough, were unhappy about having been selected ("forced" was the word they used) for participation. We did what we could to make all participants feel welcome and to encourage them to participate. During the first day, we lost three participants, who had to return to the office to take care of "pressing problems."

The second day of the workshop, one participant had to return to St. Louis; one was not present because she had broken a toe the

night before; and one was not present because he had to solve a problem with one of the company's computer programs.

The workshop itself followed a standard format. We used the following guide as a working schedule:

9:00- 9:30

Review of pretest and explanation of workshop format

Broad range of writing skills. Some quite good; some need to review basics of spelling, grammar, and usage.

Some work will be individual, some in groups. We've tried to structure the groups so that you'll be able to help each other.

Common errors: words and phrases (transparency), tone—too negative and too brusque.

Common strengths: most writing was clear purposeful, and concise.

Distribute Workbooks: *Workbook for Successful Communication in Business*

First Day

9:30-10:30 Chapters 1 and 2

10:30-10:45 Break

10:45-12:00 1st half of Chapter 3

12:00- 1:30 Lunch

1:30- 3:00 2nd half of Chapter 3 plus Chapter 4

3:00- 3:15 Break

3:15- 5:00 Application (problem from workbook); first individually, then in groups. Homework: review for second day.

Second Day

9:00-10:30 Chapters 5 and 6 (quickly)

10:30-10:45 Break

10:45-12:00 Chapter 7

12:00- 1:30 Lunch

1:30- 3:00 Chapters 8 and 9

3:00- 5:00 Problems from Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9

Distribute *Understanding and Using Communication in Business*

Weeks 4-14: Submit (mail directly to us) a photocopy of a letter, memo, or report for our evaluation. We will correct and suggest improvements and return it to you. Our main concern will be with your progress.

FIGURE 5
WORKING SCHEDULE

PROGRESS REPORTS

Although our proposal called for separate progress reports after the completion of the pretest and after the two-day workshop, we combined those reports because so many of the pretest materials arrived only a few days before the workshop.

PROGRESS REPORTS 1 AND 2

This report includes our reaction to and evaluation of the pretest and the two-day workshop.

Pretest

As materials for several of the participants arrived only two days before the workshop, we were not able to make full use of them in conducting the workshop. Materials for one person, in fact, did not arrive until *after* the workshop.

Materials for the participants reveal a broad range of writing skills. A few participants demonstrated a good grasp of the fundamentals of English usage and of reader psychology. Most, however, had trouble with one or the other, and a few had trouble with both.

Problem Areas

The most obvious problem occurring in the pretest materials was the overuse of and reliance on stock phrases and "businessese." Nearly every letter included expressions like the following:

1. Please find those documents enclosed.
2. Once again, I apologize for the delay.
3. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me.
4. Per our telephone conversation of. . .
5. Enclosed is your copy. . .
6. Looking forward to hearing from you.

In some cases, participants used such phrases without having fully considered the meaning of the words. One participant, for example, wrote "But we would not be averse to any increase in foreign business if the message is implemented."

Other grammatical problems include the following:

1. There appears to be 3 major problem areas.
2. Kelly Services is in the process of purging from their files. . .

3. Attached is a brief bio and written samples. . . .
4. Considering that we only used the reports when D&B was blank rated or nothing else was available, which means we exhausted your present sources first.
5. We have a promotion going on now that ends December 31, 1979; being that a Direct Subscriber with a terminal can purchase an unlimited number of the base NACIS Reports for one year at a one time charge of \$5,000.
6. Spiegels is very pleased with the reports they are receiving.
7. The cost to you being the initial \$100 association fee and your company's programming time.
8. Thank you for the time that you and Mr. Acon gave Steve and I on Thursday.

Participants also have problems with a number of purely mechanical matters:

1. Spelling
2. Capitalization
3. Punctuation
4. Numbers
5. Possessives

Strengths

The pretest also revealed that most participants write fairly clear, concise, and purposeful messages. In addition, three of the participants demonstrated a superior grasp of English fundamentals.

Examples

The attached examples represent the participants at their worst. By the end of the program, we should be able to correct most of their problems.

Two-Day Workshop

The two-day workshop went well. In spite of the long days and fast pace, most participants worked hard and learned quickly. Because we received such excellent cooperation from the group, we were able to cover very nearly all the material normally covered in a semester's course in business communication.

Workshop Topics

We conducted the workshop in an informal manner, combining lecture and discussion with individual and group problem-solving sessions. We were able to cover the following topics:

1. Common problems
2. Message formats (letters and memos)
3. Audience analysis and adaptation
4. Message purpose and structure
5. Elements of effective communication
 - a. clarity
 - b. courtesy
 - c. conciseness
 - d. confidence
 - e. correctness
 - f. conversational tone
6. Inquiries
7. Positive and neutral messages
8. Negative messages
9. Persuasive messages
10. Messages with more than one purpose

Participants

Our impressions of individual participants and their writing skills are as follows:

Frank Bowers: The pretest materials revealed heavy reliance on business clichés: "Enclosed you will find," "Please execute both copies," "Giving you parameters for determining," and the like. Frank writes clearly and forcefully, however, and should be able to improve his writing considerably.

Blaine Celler: The pretest materials contained primarily mechanical errors: spelling errors, possessives without the apostrophe, inappropriate use of the apostrophe, and faulty punctuation. Blaine worked extremely hard to improve his writing during the workshop.

Mary Diseman: Mary's pretest materials revealed a firm grasp of the fundamentals of English usage. With only a small improvement in business style, she will make an excellent communicator. Mary was unable to stay for the second day of the workshop.

Dave Ewing: Dave's main problem seems to be with parallel construction. Several of his pretest materials were in outline form and not especially useful for our purposes. Dave was a main contributor to workshop discussions.

Deidre Gibbons: The pretest materials are uneven. Some are written well; others contain serious grammatical problems. Deidre has sufficient skill that she should be able to improve tremendously during the next ten weeks.

Meade Hajt: Meade's pretest materials were well written. His main problem in communicating is a negative attitude, which shows in his letters as well as in face-to-face communication situations. In the next ten weeks, Meade will need to work to eliminate his tendency to appear condescending to his readers and listeners.

Fred Hergenroed: The pretest materials revealed difficulties with pronoun-antecedent agreement and with excessive use of passive voice. Most of the materials, however, were well written, and Fred should have no trouble developing an effective writing style in the next ten weeks.

Elli Hudson: Elli's pretest materials were excessively wordy and written in an old-fashioned style. Of all the workshop participants, Elli was the most unhappy about having to attend. Thursday evening she broke her toe and did not attend Friday's session.

Gerald Johnson: The pretest materials contained many business clichés and buzz words: "my assistance in interfacing your system." Gerald makes few grammatical errors and has a concise, forceful style.

Earl Linkenheimer: Earl's pretest materials contain too many stock phrases: "The file with the above corrections will be in fantastic shape"; "If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call." The workshop revealed that Earl has a good grasp of communication concepts, and he should be able to correct his problems in the next ten weeks.

Emily Low: Emily's pretest materials revealed some serious grammatical problems. She tends to write in short, choppy paragraphs and doesn't always use complete sentences. She does have a good attitude, however; and she worked hard during the workshop. We expect her to improve tremendously during the next ten weeks.

Valeria McKenzie: The pretest materials revealed a negative attitude toward the reader. Valeria does write concise, forceful messages, and during the next ten weeks she should be able to learn to write with her reader's needs and feelings in mind.

Annie Nane: Annie writes well and has a good attitude toward the reader. The pretest materials were among the best we received, and she worked hard and enthusiastically during the workshop. Once she learns to avoid clichés and stock business phrases in her writing, she will be an excellent communicator.

Robert Polosaari: The pretest materials contained many clichés and stock business phrases. In spite of this and a tendency to be too wordy, Robert communicates clearly and forcefully. He was a main contributor during the

workshop exercises, and we expect him to improve tremendously over the next ten weeks.

April Quible: April's pretest materials were well written except for the typical use of clichés and stock business phrases. She has a good attitude toward communication and has the potential to become a first-rate business writer.

Ruth Shermann: The pretest materials revealed some purely mechanical problems: use of commas and hyphens. Ruth also uses too many clichés and stock business phrases. She did well with the workshop exercises and should continue to progress during the next ten weeks.

Rich Wacker: Rich's pretest materials revealed typical reliance on clichés and stock business phrases. He does, however, communicate clearly and seems eager to improve. We expect him to improve a great deal in the next ten weeks.

We did not receive pretest materials for Barbra Power. Joan Hensteps was not listed as a participant, but she attended the workshop. Those who were listed as participants but did not attend include Amy O'Tay, Bruce Phillips, Annie Nota, and E. Pogrinka.

FIGURE 6 PROGRESS REPORTS 1 AND 2

After ten weeks, we submitted the following report.

COMMUNICATION UNLIMITED
809 Weaver Avenue
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007

Joel P. Bowman, Ph.D.
(616) 345-2740
Bernadine P. Branchaw, Ed.D.
(616) 344-7761

4 June 1980

To: David Dawson, Kermit Holland, and Ted Alford

From: Joel Bowman and Bernadine Branchaw

Subject: Progress Report 3

Eight of the Writing Skills Workshop participants have completed at least half of their ten weekly assignments. The following people have completed assignments as follows:

Name	Number Completed
B. Celler	4
M. Diseman	2
D. Ewing	6
M. Hajt	7
F. Hergenroed	10
G. Johnson	4
R. Linkenheimer	4
E. Low	10
V. McKenzie	1
A. Nane	4
R. Polosaari	8
A. Quible	5
R. Shermann	5
R. Wacker	10

We have not received assignments from F. Bowers, D. Gibbons, E. Hudson, and B. Power.

As you can see from the attached samples, several of the participants have demonstrated good progress. Others are still making some basic errors. Ewing, Hergenroed, Polosaari, and Quible have demonstrated superior writing skills.

At this point we recommend that you encourage participants to complete all ten assignments by a specific date so that we can set a date for the follow-up session.

enc

FIGURE 7 PROGRESS REPORT 3

FOLLOW-UP SESSION

We continued to collect, mark, and return assignments for the next several weeks. Finally, in spite of the fact that not all of the participants had completed the required ten assignments, BIG scheduled the follow-up session. We were to meet once again at a Chicago-area hotel. We prepared the following agenda:

AGENDA

8:30- 9:00	Registration, Coffee, and Rolls
9:00- 9:30	Questions and Comments
9:30-10:30	Review
10:30-10:45	Break
10:45-12:00	Summary of Evaluations, Pretest, and Weekly Assignments
12:00- 1:30	Lunch
1:30- 3:00	Tips and Shortcuts
3:00- 3:15	Break
3:15- 4:30	The Public Relations of Written Communication
4:30- 5:00	Evaluations and Certificates of Achievement

FIGURE 8
AGENDA FOR FOLLOW-UP SESSION

By the time of the follow-up session, the training director who had arranged the program was no longer with BIG, Inc. We discovered the day of the final session that many of the others who had been participants in the first session were also no longer with the company. The division of BIG for which we were conducting the training program had been severely hit by the "credit crunch" of 1980. Only five of the original group were present at the last session. Some of the others were still with the company but unable to attend, either because the travel money wasn't available or because the company was having problems that required their attention. Because so few were in attendance, we abandoned our planned agenda and spent the time talking about communication in general, human relations, and organizational behavior. We answered specific questions about items of concern to the participants.

At the last session, we distributed the evaluation forms and certificates shown below:

**EVALUATION SHEET FOR 15-WEEK WRITING SKILLS
CAREER DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR**

1. How would you rate this program?
☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor
2. Were there portions which could have been excluded or expanded?

3. The general quality of instruction was
☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor
4. The concepts introduced in the program were
☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor
5. Do you feel you benefited from this program?
☐ Very much ☐ Generally, yes ☐ To some extent
☐ Slightly ☐ No
If so, how?

6. What other career development topics would you find helpful? You may check more than one.
- ☐ a. Advanced Writing Skills
 - ☐ b. Business Presentations
 - ☐ c. Conflict Management
 - ☐ d. Goal Setting and Management by Objectives
 - ☐ e. Group Communication
 - ☐ f. Leadership
 - ☐ g. Listening
 - ☐ h. Organizational/Managerial Communication
 - ☐ i. Report Writing
 - ☐ j. Time Management

USE THE REVERSE SIDE FOR ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

**FIGURE 9
EVALUATION FORM**

.....
.....
.....
.....

COMMUNICATION UNLIMITED

Certificate of Achievement

This is to certify that

has satisfactorily completed

CAREER DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR

_____	_____
Date	Directors

**FIGURE 10
CERTIFICATE**

FINAL REPORT

After returning to Kalamazoo, we submitted the following final report:

COMMUNICATION UNLIMITED
809 Weaver Avenue
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007

Joel P. Bowman, Ph.D.
(616) 345-2740
Bernadine P. Branchaw, Ed.D.
(616) 344-7761

6 October 1980

Ms. Nancy Mott
Sr. Human Relations Administrator
Information Services Division of BIG, Inc.
25 Regency Square
New York, NY 10020

The accommodations, Nancy,

were first-rate. The facilities and service provided by the Excalibur Hotel were excellent.

Our only disappointment was that so few of the original group were able to return to complete the Writing Skills Workshop as planned. We had an enjoyable, productive day with those who were there, however.

Attendees

Participants for the day were

Fred Hergenroed (about half the day)
Gerald Johnson
Earl Linkenheimer
Annie Nane (morning session only)
Ruth Shermann

Topics Covered

Because the session had so few participants, we abandoned the planned agenda and concentrated on the individual writing skills and questions of those present. We did conduct a formal review of basic skills, including an examination of papers prepared since the original two-day session.

We also covered the preparation of form and guide letters, the Gunning Fog Index, the advantages of dictation, and preparations for word processing equipment.

Certificates

The following people completed sufficient assignments and have demonstrated sufficient skills to merit receiving a certificate (sample enclosed):

Dave Ewing
Meade Hajt
Fred Hergenroed
Emily Low
Annie Nane
Robert Polosarri
April Quible
Ruth Shermann
Rich Wacker

In addition, Gerald Johnson and Earl Linkenheimer will complete the assignments necessary to earn a certificate, and we will mail theirs as soon as they do.

Evaluations

We distributed evaluations to the participants; but because there were so few for the last session, we suspect that the results will not help you much. We will forward those we receive.

Our own evaluation of the program is that it was less than fully successful for a number of reasons. The first of these is the extensive personnel changes experienced by BIG between the original and follow-up sessions. We feel that we have improved the writing skills of those who completed the program as originally planned. As you know, however, we have influenced too few people for the Writing Skills Workshop to have a lasting impact on BIG. A company's employees naturally tend to write the same way upper-level managers write. If managers express themselves well, employees will develop adequate writing skills. On the other hand, if managers have writing problems, even those employees who have undergone skills training will imitate the style of management.

Recommendations

While we believe that the original concept of skill building over time is a good one, we recognize that business trends may interfere with a program that lasts several weeks. Should you decide to attempt another writing skills course, we recommend that the material be presented in smaller amounts, in self-contained units, and to a greater number of people.

Four half-day sessions over a two-day period, including everyone in a particular locale from the division of district manager down to the secretaries might accomplish more for BIG than the extended workshop just completed.

Let us know if we can provide any other information you would find useful. In our conversations with BIG personnel, we did learn quite a bit about communication practices at BIG, and perhaps we could help.

Call or write. . . or, better yet, stop in Kalamazoo for a visit when you get the chance.

We'd love to meet you.



Joel P. Bowman



Bernadine P. Branchaw

2 enc

1. Sample Certificate
2. Statement for Services and Expenses

FIGURE 11
FINAL REPORT

COMMUNICATION UNLIMITED
809 Weaver Avenue
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007

Joel P. Bowman, Ph.D.
(616) 345-2740
Bernadine P. Branchaw, Ed.D.
(616) 344-7761

6 October 1980

STATEMENT FOR SERVICES AND EXPENSES

For Professional Services (see Purchase Order 16514) \$2,250.00
 Expenses for 3 October 1980 (Receipts attached)

Joel P. Bowman

Plane	\$128.34
Hotel (includes breakfast 2-3 Oct. and dinner 2 Oct)	151.33
Ground Transportation	14.55
Postage	15.00
	309.22

Bernadine P. Branchaw

Plane	\$128.34
Hotel (includes breakfast 2-3 Oct.)	96.24
Dinner, 3 Oct	55.00
Car mileage from Kalamazoo to Battle Creek Airport	
& Gr. Trans.	24.16
Duplication Services and Transparencies	8.00
	311.74

TOTAL \$2,870.96

Please make check payable to

Joel P. Bowman and Bernadine P. Branchaw
 Communication Unlimited

THE BOTTOM LINE

All things considered, we were amply rewarded for the work we did. Had everything gone as originally planned, however, our fee would have been too low. In addition to our financial return, we learned some valuable lessons.

First, we learned the "the best laid schemes o' mice and men gang aft a-gley." Second, we learned that although business claims to be highly interested in effective written communication, most managers believe that others are at fault and that others should attend writing seminars. Third, we learned that the longer the training program, the greater the need for flexibility. Finally, we learned that regardless of how well or poorly seminar participants are capable of communicating, their communication style will be a reflection of the communication style practiced by company management. Any lasting change must begin at the top.

We still believe that the 15-week format has potential. In a stable business, in a stable business environment, and with support from management, we'd do it again . . . in a minute!

Industry Needs College Technical Communications Instructors

Herman Estrin, *New Jersey Institute of Technology*

Industry needs college instructors of technical communication to teach engineers, technicians, supervisors, and scientists. Instructors need not worry about the course materials because they are somewhat similar to those which instructors teach collegians. To be specific, in a college report writing course, instructors will find that most collegians make the following errors in grammar and usage: (1) the agreement of subject and verb (2) the dangling modifier (3) the lack of parallel structure (4) the overuse of the indefinite *this* and *it* (5) the lack of subordination. Instructors in industry will have to review their students on these same five errors. Also, in a college speech course, the instructor's objectives are to help the student organize facts and ideas for oral presentations, to use visual aids effectively, to analyze audiences, and to learn the facets of body language. In a course such as *Effective Business Presentations*, the college instructor may use the same objectives and possibly the same text and similar resources of the college classroom.

Instructors in industry must remember that there is no "master plan" for an in-plant course, as each course has its own objectives, varied students, time allotments, teaching techniques, and other demands. However, having taught over fifteen years in industry, I suggest that potential instructors in industry consider these facets of course structure:

1. *The size of the class.* For a course on Effective Report Writing a class of 15 is ideal, as the instructor can give each student individual instruction. Under no circumstances should an instructor have more than 30 students. However, you may find that 20 students are a comfortable class. In a speech course the ideal number is also 15, but an instructor should not accept more than 20. With this number each student will have a chance to speak every session.

These courses should contain engineers, scientists, supervisors, and managers—all from different fields because this mixture adds

This article originally appeared in the 1981 American Society for Engineering Education Annual Conference Proceedings, pp. 104-109. Copyright © 1981 by the American Society for Engineering Education. Reprinted by permission of the publisher and the author.

variety and interest to the course and gives the class a real-life situation. For both writing and speaking courses this mixture of students should be encouraged.

2. *The length of the class.* Class meetings should be minimally two hours. In a writing course a three-hour class may be scheduled if the third hour is used for the writing assignment. During the third hour the instructor may present the writing assignment and may supervise the writing of each student. If industry insists on one-hour classes, then the course must meet twice a week to ensure continuity.

In a speech course a three-hour class can be scheduled because the instructor may use two hours of class discussions, lectures, and workshops and one hour of student presentations before the group.

3. *Frequency and number of meetings.* Most instructors in industry agree that the best frequency of class meetings is one meeting a week. This weekly interval enables the instructor to check the assignments and to prepare resources and notes. Also, the students can complete their reading and writing assignments during the week. If possible, instructors should not teach on Fridays because the students have "weekend" responsibilities to complete on that day, and, therefore, student attendance and motivation are low.

As for the number of class meetings, six or seven weeks seem to be ideal. Should the class need an additional week for individual conferences or for coverage of supplementary material, the instructor can always add another week.

4. *The time of the course.* The course should be held on company time, preferably in the morning when both the students and the instructor are psychologically fresh. Instructors should avoid the late afternoon hours of 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

5. *Establishment of rapport with the management and the course.* The instructor should enlist the support of top management to promote the course by announcements in staff meetings, in a brochure, or through the in-house organ. Top management, middle management, and the supervisory staff should show an enthusiasm for the course and should encourage students to enroll. To open the course, the President or his deputy should say a few words concerning course purposes and objectives.

6. *The formation of the class.* Supervisors and members of middle management will select those students eligible. Some personnel will request to take the course. Ideally there should be a

variety of students. They should not consider the class as remedial but as one to improve their writing, reading, speaking, and listening skills.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF TECHNIQUES OF TEACHING TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION COURSES

The effective teaching techniques of an in-plant course should be varied: discussions, lectures, individual conferences, workshops, and homework assignments.

The instructor will find that discussions, which involve both students and teachers, are very productive; however, to accomplish this goal, the instructor must plan the discussion carefully, set the goals of the lesson, offer resources for the students, and keep the discussion under control. On the other hand, lectures may contribute less to the learning process because the class, for the most part, is passive during the lectures. One must remember that lectures can offer the most economical way to present material in a given time. Unless the lectures are well timed and well planned, the instructor must use a common understanding of the subject; otherwise, the lectures will not contribute much to the subject matter.

The instructor will find individual conferences with students in both the writing and the speech class to be helpful. As a suggestion, the writing instructor may request each student to keep all corrected writings in a folio. Perhaps at the end of the sixth week or at the end of the course, the instructor may request a ten-minute conference with the student and critique the various papers. During the critique the instructor should point out both the positive and negative aspects of the students' writings. Also, after this instructor-student conference, students may have conferences with other students and may give their colleagues editorial critiques of their folios. In this activity the teacher may serve as a referee between the two students and should interrupt the conferences only if an error or an important omission of the critiques is noted.

If teaching a course in oral communication, the instructor should schedule a ten-minute conference with each student at the end of the fifth or sixth week. During this interval the instructor should review the overall comments noted on each student's 4 x 6 card, review the constructive aspects of the student's performance, and tell the student how to improve. These one-on-one conferences

are very effective because they individualize the instruction, let the students know exactly how they have progressed, and allow the students to feel that the instructor and the course have been relevant.

As a technique, the workshop is effective, if planned well, because it involves class participation. However, the workshop must be supplemented with discussions, lectures, and readings. During the workshop the instructor may assign short writing, reading, or speaking assignments. Also the instructor should distribute handouts, present summaries of the workshop, and possibly coordinate the workshop with a lecture and the speaking/reading assignment.

A topic coordinated with the lecture, workshop, and reading assignment may be as follows:

Topic in the lecture—The Use of Graphic Aids in Report Writing; Reference—Mills and Walter, *Technical Reporting* (4th Ed.); Reading Assignment—Use the following graphic aids: pictures, illustrations, bar graphs, line graphs in strategic areas of the report: Prepare a "List of Figures" for the prefatory materials in the report. (See Mills and Walter, p. 380).

Homework assignments play a prominent role during in-plant courses. For each class of effective writing, homework should include a reading and writing assignment. This should allow the students a chance to express themselves; to practice organization, vocabulary, grammar, and format; and to supplement the lecture-workshop materials with relevant examples that could not be covered in class. Reading assignments can be made from the textbooks, magazine articles, various supplemental references, or any source of information the instructor selects.

Evaluations

Instructors who teach in industry will most likely be evaluated by their students. Usually during the last hour of the course, students are given evaluation forms (see Figure 1) to be completed. For the improvement of instruction, industry needs this feedback from the class. By the collated evaluations, industry learns some of the following facets about the course:

1. The length and the time of the course
2. The textbooks and the resources presented during the course
3. The methods of instruction
4. The strengths and the weaknesses of the course

5. The quality of instruction
6. The student's recommendation of the course to colleagues (an important facet of the evaluation)
7. The comforts/discomforts of the meeting room
8. Students' suggestions for additional subject matter and resources
9. Students' suggestions for deletions from the course
10. Students' reactions to the entire presentation of the course

When the evaluations have been collated, industry may ask the instructor to review the evaluation and perhaps to revise the course content, the methods of instruction, and the texts and references used in the course.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT DIVISION COURSE EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

The course evaluation questionnaire provides the Career Development Division with important information from course participants. Past comments have resulted in course modification and improvement. Please help us by completing this form thoughtfully. Thank you.

TITLE OF COURSE:

INSTRUCTOR'S NAME:

LOCATION:

DATE OF CONCLUDING SESSION:

I. Scheduling

A. The length of the sessions was:

☐ Satisfactory ☐ Too Long ☐ Too Short

B. The number of sessions was:

☐ Satisfactory ☐ Too Few ☐ Too many

II. Physical Facilities

A. Were there any deficiencies or discomforts in the meeting room? If so, explain.

III. Program Subject Matter

A. Of the topics covered in the program, which would you regard as being of the most value to you? Why?

- B. What suggestions (if any) do you have for improving the teaching aids used in this course?
- C. The instructor was:
☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor
- D. How could the instructor be more effective?
- V. Reaction to Meeting as a Whole
- A. Did the course live up to your expectations? Please explain your answer.
- B. In general, how would you rate this program?
☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor
- C. Please make any additional comments or suggestions which you feel would be helpful in planning future courses.

FIGURE 1
COURSE EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

SAMPLE SYLLABI

The following appendices offer syllabi which can be covered in short courses of five to ten weeks. However, instructors should be willing to change the assignments, textbooks, and methods of instruction according to the objectives of each course and to the backgrounds, interests, and needs of the students.

APPENDIX A

Effective Writing Syllabus

Instructor: Name, Title, Affiliations, and so on.

Text: Estrin, Herman A. *Technical and Professional Writing: A Practical Anthology*. New York: Preston Publishing Co., 1976.

Weeks 1 and 2: Introduction to the course and discussion of the aims of the course.

The course includes such topics as the following: the functions of written communications; the analysis of reader and writer problems; effective memo and letter writing; the precise use of language; clarity in writing; analysis of writing styles; critiques of reports and correspondence submitted by the participants; and the use of nonverbal communication.

The Writer and The Responsibilities to The Reader

Read TPW

Young, "Responsibilities of Writers and Editors to Readers," pp. 221-232.

Racker, "Selecting and Writing to the Proper Level," pp. 236-246.

Southier, "What Management Wants in the Technical Report," pp. 245-253.

Discuss:

1. the identification of the reader and the analysis of needs.
2. the following characteristics of effective writing: accuracy, brevity, clarity, and readability.
3. the article, "The Need for and the Improvement of Technical Writing," *The Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*.
4. these principles of effective writing:
 - a. Consider the level of your audience.
 - b. Know the specific purpose of each writing assignment.
 - c. Organize your thoughts by means of an outline.
 - d. Have a thorough knowledge of the subject.

Assignment:

Week 1: Prepare a paper which describes in detail your professional/technical specialty, or write a complete job analysis.

Week 2: Write a paper and state six rules which will help you write clear, concise prose.

Weeks 3 and 4**Types of Writing—Letters, Abstracts, Memoranda, and Reports.****Read TPW**

Laird, "How to Start to Write a Report," pp. 25-30.

Hamlett, "Suggestions for the Preparation of Technical Papers," pp. 40-47.

Arnold, "The Writing of Abstracts," pp. 55-56.

Johnson, "How Well Do You Inform?"

Discuss:

1. Positive and Negative Words in Letter Writing.
2. Words and Phrases to Avoid in Letter Writing.
3. "Letters that Sell," The Royal Bank of Canada, May, 1974.
4. "Improving Style in Letter Writing."
5. "How Well Do You Inform?"
6. The Role of the Abstract.

Assignment:

Week 3: Write a form letter 250 to 300 words long in which you try to convince the readers to perform some action such as coming to a meeting for a cause of common interest, joining in some program such as weed control or control of a tree disease in the area, attempting to obtain some municipal involvement, or joining some organization. As an alternative, you might solicit pledges or contributions to support some program or activity. The subject should be a matter of lively interest in your home, community, or profession.

Week 4: Write a 200-word abstract of "Letters that Sell," May, 1974, or "How Well Do You Inform?"

Note the Positive Words

appreciate	efficient	notable	service
benefit	excellent	please	sincerity
capable	faith	prestige	success
commendable	friendly	recommend	thank you
cooperate	grateful	reliable	thoughtful

Weeks 5 and 6**Word Choice, Usage, and Graphic Aids****Read TPW**

Sullivan, "Words—Tools of Thought," pp. 97-105.

Swain, "Giving Power to Words," pp. 185-190.

Bolton, "The Art of Writing," pp. 177-184.

Conferences with students to review all written work.

Discuss:

1. "Glossary of Words Commonly Misused."
2. The effective use of graphic aids.
3. "Troublesome Spots in Writing."
 - a. dangling modifiers
 - b. subordination
 - c. parallelism
 - d. agreement of subject and verb
 - e. the use of indefinite *this* and *it*
4. Punctuation:
 - a. comma
 - b. semicolon
 - c. colon
 - d. dash
 - e. parentheses
 - f. hyphen
 - g. apostrophe

Assignment: Write an analysis of your writing style. Examine at least six to ten pieces of writing that you have done recently. Analyze your style according to some of these elements:

1. precise use of words
2. variety of sentences
3. paragraph length
4. grammar and usage
5. mechanics
6. punctuation

Answer these questions:

1. Do you use parallel structure effectively?
2. Do you avoid the use of the indefinite *this*?
3. Do you avoid dangling modifiers?
4. Do your subjects agree with your verbs in number and person?

OR:

Write an analysis of a Port Authority publication. Use the above guidelines.

Weeks 7 and 8

Style in Technical and Professional Writing

Read TPW:

Michaelson, "Creative Aspects of Engineering Writing," pp. 8-13 and
"Clarity in Technical Writing," pp. 48-51.

The Royal Bank of Canada, "About Style in Writing," pp. 126-134.
Freedman, "The Seven Sins of Technical Writing," pp. 139-148.
Boynton, "How Well Do You Write?" pp. 255-260.

Discuss:

1. The scientific attitude in writing, precise use of words, eye relief, sentence length, sentence variety, paragraph development, the four most common usage errors made by engineers and scientists.

2. "An Approach to Style"—*The Elements of Style*

Assignment:

Write an analysis of a scientific/technical magazine. Use the attached guidelines.

APPENDIX B**Speech Communication and Human Interaction Syllabus**

Instructor: Name, Title, Affiliations, and so on.

Text: Scheidel, Thomas M. *Speech Communication and Human Interaction*: Oakland, New Jersey: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1976.

Objectives:

1. To help the student achieve self-identification, self-fulfillment, and self-satisfaction during communication.
2. To help the student to assess communicative self-dimensions, to understand anxieties, and to control fears.
3. To understand verbal and nonverbal aspects of messages.
4. To learn the purposes, advantages, and disadvantages of small group communication.
5. To examine the nature of interpersonal conflict—its causes, issues, context, and intensity factors.
6. To learn how to plan a speech and to select and adapt a subject to the audience.
7. To practice to communicate orally with presentation patterns, vital language, and visual aids.
8. To put the media in perspective—special factors in the mass communication process, reasons people use the media, and effects of mass media.
9. To comprehend intercultural vs. intracultural communication.
10. To learn a new culture by developing empathy, avoiding communication pitfalls, and using sources to facilitate communication.

This course will meet from 9:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. for seven weeks. The following is a tentative course of study:

Session I

The Speech Communication Process. Elements in the process: speaking/listening agents, interaction, and transmitting and receiving verbal and non-verbal messages.

Why We Communicate. Establishing social contact and a self-concept; achieving self-identification, self-fulfillment, self-existence, and self-satisfaction.

Self-Discovery and Self-Actualization. Communicative self-dimensions. Assessment of yourself as a source of knowledge.

Session II

Communicative Messages and Information Exchange. Receiving and interpreting messages. Good habits of listening and looking.

Planning Messages and Adjusting to Feedback. Reading listener's responses, reacting to the absence of feedback, refraining from overreacting.

3rd Hour—Speeches by students in the class.

Session III

Bases of Decision Making. General approaches to problem-solving: creative thinking, reflective thinking, inferential patterns, scanning, and focusing.

The Effects of Communicative Interaction. Information gain, attitude formation, and attitude change.

3rd Hour—Speeches by students in the class.

Session IV

Dyadic Communication. Assessment and analysis of dyadic communication situations.

Small Group Communication. The purposes, advantages, disadvantages, and usefulness of small group discussion.

3rd Hour—Divide the class into groups and structure and analyze small group discussions.

Session V

Managing Conflict in Interaction. The nature of interpersonal conflict: causes, issues, perception of issues, contexts and intensity factors.

Speech Planning and Preparation. Planning, organizing, and outlining the speech.

3rd Hour—Speeches by students in the class.

Session VI

Speech Practice and Presentation. Presenting the speech: auditory and visual factors, using visual aids, and factors of credibility. Evaluating public speech communication.

2nd Hour—Speeches by students.

3rd Hour—Speeches by students.

Session VII

Intercultural Communication. Learning a new culture: developing empathy, avoiding communication pitfalls, and using sources to facilitate communication.

2nd Hour—Televisé students presenting a demonstration speech.

3rd Hour—Televisé students presenting a demonstration speech.

Evaluation of the course.

APPENDIX C

Two-Day Seminar in Effective Technical and Business Writing

Objectives of the course

1. To improve the style of technical writing.
2. To present scientific/technical information professionally.
3. To organize and to outline technical information logically.
4. To adapt the technical writing to the reader.
5. To capture and to retain the reader's interest and attention.
6. To use precise language in technical writing.
7. To present management with technical information in a coordinated, concise manner.
8. To prepare a report in a professional style.
9. To learn the current trends in letter and memoranda writing.
10. To present graphic aids in a report in a logical, relevant manner.

References

Estrin, Herman A. *Technical and Professional Writing: A Practical Anthology*. New York: Preston Publishing Company, 1976.

Estrin, Herman A. et al. *Chemical Engineering Handbook for Reporting Information*. Newark, New Jersey: New Jersey Institute of Technology, 1978.

Mills, Gordon and John Walter. *Technical Writing*. (4th Edition) New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1978.

Instructor

Dr. Herman A. Estrin, Department of Humanities, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Newark, New Jersey 07102, Telephone: (201) 645-5218, Room: 323, Student Center

OUTLINE OF THE COURSE

Day 1

8:30- 9:00 Discussion on the overview and objectives of the seminar

9:00-12:00 How to Improve the Style of Technical Writing

Reader adaptation

Precise use of words

Sentence structure and length

Paragraph structure and length

Common errors in grammar and usage

Punctuation and mechanics

(Reference: *Harbrace Handbook*)

12:00- 1:00 Lunch

1:00- 2:30 Current Trends in Business Letter Writing

- 2:30- 3:00 Presentation of Errors in Contract Writing and Its Negative Impact on the Company
- 3:00- 3:30 Discussion of the Objectives of Weekly Reports and Contract Letters and Other Documents.
- 3:30- 5:00 Critiques—Students' writing of weekly reports, letters, contracts, and informal memos will be placed in an opaque projector. The instructor and the students will critique these writings concerning the facets of style listed above.

Day II

- 8:30- 9:30 Review of the information in Session I
- 9:30-12:00 How to Make a Report Look Professional; Discussion of the following items:
- Prefatory materials
 - Title Page
 - Letter of Transmittal
 - Table of Contents
 - List of Figures
 - Abstracts
 - Headings and Subheadings
 - Documentation of Materials
 - The Use and the Presentation of Graphic Aids
- 12:00- 1:00 Lunch
- 1:00- 3:00 Writing Memos and Reports to Management; Discussion of the handout "Writing for Your Audience"
- 3:00- 5:00 Individual Conferences and consultations; Critiques of student's writing; Evaluation of the course

Reading Assignments

For Session I—Read the following articles in Estrin's *Technical and Professional Writing*.

Improving Technical Writing, pp. 221-225

About Style in Writing, pp. 126-134

Giving Power to Words, pp. 185-190

Sentence and Word Length in Scientific Writing, pp. 191-193

Engineers Can Write Better: The Long and the Short of It, pp. 203-220

For Session II—

Design That Report!, pp. 225-229

Responsibilities of Writers to Editors, pp. 229-233

Selecting and Writing to the Proper Level, pp. 236-246

What Management Wants in a Technical Report, pp. 246-253

A Model Syllabus for In-House Corporate Speech Training*

John Hollwitz and Eric Matthiesen, *Creighton University*

In the early 1960s, Marshall McLuhan predicted that American society would shift its emphasis from the written and spoken word to new forms of information processing.¹ Since McLuhan's prophecy radio, television, and print media have developed new technologies in information storage and telecommunications. At the same time, educators recognized a corresponding decline in traditional literacy, a decline not limited simply to reading and writing. A recent essay in *Time* magazine argues that the electronic media (particularly television) have drastically affected our ability to speak and to be understood.² As communication teachers, we face a troubling and paradoxical situation: our capacity to generate, store, and share information expands, but individuals become increasingly inarticulate. Our technology may have made us speechless.

The problem of declining speech skills is not restricted to school curricula. The business community speaks of a similar situation. Some companies, now very concerned with employees' communication skills, rank effective communication among their greatest needs.³ Stephen Madeline of the Ford Motor Company, who recently addressed the problem before the American Business Communication Association, said that modern business suffers from "communication overload"⁴ and from "an information-glut problem."⁵ Madeline's solution is to train managers and administrators in a new job skill, "to replace written communication with verbal—and visual—communication."⁶ Sandra O'Connell further argues that oral communication is a key to industrial productivity: it facilitates decision-making, minimizes potential conflicts, and carries messages that would be lost in print.⁷

Many colleges and universities have established courses or even degree concentrations in business communication to enhance these skills. These curricular revisions are limited. They affect current students, the next generations of professionals, but the courses do not often reach the administrators and managers who are established in the corporations. And even through companies have begun

*This article originally appeared in *The ABCA Bulletin*, 44 (June 1981), 13-15. Reprinted by permission of the publisher and the authors.

to contract in-house communication seminars, surprisingly few programs offer fundamental techniques of informative and persuasive speaking. Most concentrate instead on interpersonal topics such as listening, interviewing, and grievances.⁸ Further, most textbooks for in-house training treat writing improvement. Those which teach oral communication are largely limited to internal settings. They do not address today's marketplace, in which executives are increasingly involved with outside communication. As Madeline argued, "Doing your job and letting the public relations department handle external communications is no longer adequate."⁹ The business community is a new student population beyond the traditional classroom which needs and desires training in communication skills.

We would like to describe an oral communication program which we have developed for corporate professionals. The program teaches several strategies for developing informative and persuasive speeches for sophisticated audiences (such as business colleagues) or for general interest groups (such as civic organizations). An in-house program often has severe time limitations: most business people cannot devote nine to twelve weeks of several class meetings to speech training. Our program compensates for reduced classroom hours in three respects. It has a lecture-laboratory structure, dividing time between the presentation of needed skills and practice in their implementation; it is team taught, accommodating more students (up to twenty) without sacrificing individual attention in practice sessions; and, finally instruction features the communication model elaborated by Carl Hovland and Irving Janis: effective speech requires the attention, comprehension, and acceptance of listeners.¹⁰ The three elements are closely related and interdependent. For listeners to comprehend a message, the speaker must hold their attention; for listeners to accept a speech, the speaker must offer a comprehensible message. In simplified form, this model provides a conceptual framework which helps participants to organize the instructional material.

The complete seminar consists of two sessions (or 'modules') consisting of lectures, practice, and discussion; each can be presented in a six- to eight-hour session. Module One is introductory. Module Two offers more advanced material. They can be separately purchased, thus providing the option of contracting for a full or partial program.

MODULE ONE: ACCEPTANCE AND COMPREHENSION

The first session teaches strategies for gaining an audience's attention and comprehension. It consists of three general topic-areas and concludes with an exercise in preparing and delivering a short talk. The first topic-area is a general introduction to oral communication and covers the increasing importance of verbal skills in business, the advantages to the administrator of competence in public speaking, and an overview of the seminar. The second and third sections treat attention and comprehension, presented in terms of the discovery of arguments and the mechanics of voice and gesture.

Since participants are likely to feel the extreme self-consciousness of stage fright, we offer some elementary relaxation exercises for voice and body to help alleviate anxiety. We begin the study of attention with the physical aspects of delivery, the verbal and nonverbal communication of the body. This includes eye contact, the physiology of speech, and gesture. Attention also includes the use of supporting arguments, primarily technical and nontechnical appeals. At this stage of the seminar we stress the nontechnical appeals of precedent and testimony. Since most participants have some sense of these (and of statistical argumentation as well), it is sufficient to call their attention to the formal structure and arrangement of these proofs in various speaking contexts. We also introduce audience analysis, a topic treated in greater detail later in the seminar. In the first module we assume the audience to consist of business colleagues who share a common vocabulary and some expertise in the profession. We suggest that participants imagine a 'sample listener' to be addressed to remind them of likely attitudes and dispositions of their audience.

The third section of the seminar studies problems of comprehension. Comprehension and attention are interdependent: a nonattentive audience will not follow the speech; an incomprehensible speech will lose the audience's attention. We teach that the two are analogous. Comprehension also requires effective proofs and effective delivery. We cover the overall construction of the speech, including alternative methods of speech preparation and the context in which each is appropriate. For example, highly technical reports might require the reading of a detailed manuscript, whereas a less formal presentation (such as an address to a civic group) could benefit from outline composition and a memorized presentation. We also present some important elements of speech

composition, particularly transitions, restriction and focus, and the subordination of ideas. A final topic is vocal delivery and language choice.

Module One ends with an exercise in preparation and delivery. We ask participants to prepare and deliver a short speech on a subject appropriate to their profession. Since participants have read the syllabus before hand, they may attend with at least a general idea of a topic. We encourage simple informative speeches developed from outline on subjects of close familiarity to the participants. The exercise permits the instructors to work rather closely with the speakers during their preparation. We critique the speeches as a group.

MODULE TWO: ACCEPTANCE

The second module consists of two parts. Each develops advanced topics in argumentation and provides an opportunity for further practice in speech preparation and delivery. We emphasize the third element of the Hovland-Janis model, the audience's acceptance of the speaker's thesis.

The first section of this module builds a theory of persuasion. Since we now assume that the speakers will address a nonspecialist or even hostile listeners, audience analysis becomes especially important to anticipate attitudes and structure proofs. In a group exercise, participants select a sample audience and construct a detailed model of its economic background, its values, and its likely response to the issues of the speech. Even though the imaginary audience will vary because of the makeup of participants, a challenging audience provides a useful model. Many companies deal with consumer interest groups or regulatory agencies, and these provide a useful background for building persuasive speeches. With the sample audience in mind, we present strategies for winning belief. We cover the technical appeals of classical rhetoric: the rational, emotional, and ethical modes of persuasion. The last is particularly important because it treats the various positive and negative images that a corporate representative can project. We specifically address problems of audience hostility, particularly in question and answer sessions.

The session closes with an exercise in preparing and delivering a short speech. The assignment differs from the previous one in two respects: we ask that the speech be persuasive; we conclude each

with a simulated question and answer session. Instructors again work closely with participants during preparation.

This seminar provides a useful introductory course in public speaking for professionals. We would like to stress that because it is an outline, it is flexible. Since companies have varying needs, the best adaptation of an academic curriculum is one developed individually for a client. Organizations vary in resources, too. Some may offer videotape equipment for practice speeches while others may lack even a blackboard.

We would make several practical suggestions which are not immediately obvious from the syllabus. Contractual arrangements vary according to the nature of the company, its specific needs, the amount of preparation time, and distances to be travelled. The business communication literature contains much information on the formalities of consulting.

The seminar is all too limited by time. Much material could be added, but each module fills a six to eight hour session—a long day for professionals with full commitments elsewhere. A series of shorter meetings would be preferable were it possible to juggle personnel schedules. Obviously, the situation varies with the company. Some of the larger corporations require set periods of their executives for educational 'retreats.' Others are less formal. Longer sessions require fairly frequent breaks, with opportunities to stretch and to chat informally; we schedule these between the major sections of each module.

Although many good introductory speech texts exist, we decided not to use a textbook for these seminars. Few can be covered in sixteen hours of instruction. We distribute hand-out materials at each stage of the seminar to provide a permanent record of guidelines, samples, hints, and resources. Finally, we believe that the individual coaching in practice sessions is a critical aspect of the course. It cannot replace long-term contact with students; nor can the two practice speeches develop skills that would normally accumulate over a semester's time. In the past, we have offered to spend time after the seminar with participants who wish assistance with job related speeches. We offer in-house office hours for two-hour periods in each of several weeks following the seminar.

Corporate professionals require speech training but are unable to pursue it in its traditional academic forms. Skills in external communication are more important than ever. Many of them can be developed through practice in these strategies for informative and persuasive speaking.

NOTES

1. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), pp. 82ff.
2. Lance Morrow, "The Decline and Fall of Oratory," *Time*, August 18, 1980, pp. 76-78.
3. Linda L. Putnam, "Role Functions and Role Conflicts of Communication Trainers," *The Journal of Business Communication*, 17 (Fall 1979), 37f.
4. Stephen Madeline, address to 1980 Midwest Regional Conference of the American Business Communication Association, p. 5. (Typewritten.)
5. Madeline, p. 7.
6. Madeline, p. 7.
7. Sandra O'Connell, *The Manager as Communicator* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), pp. 28 and 73f.
8. Putnam, 40ff.
9. Madeline, p. 10.
10. Carl Hovland and Irving Janis, *et al*, *Personality and Persuasibility* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959).

Sample Short Course Outlines

L. W. Denton, IBM Corporation, Austin, Texas

All of us who have taught short courses in effective writing or related subjects have struggled with organizing those courses. We've learned two major lessons about course structure: (1) A good organizational plan is basic to the success of any short course, and (2) What works well once may not work well again.

An outline may well become a "crutch" for most of us. That "crutch" allows us to feel comfortable in our approach to teaching a short course. We find ourselves returning each time to an organizational plan which generally has worked well for us and our students. The danger occurs, of course, when we become so comfortable that we resist change.

Let me be quick to point out that the *nothing* substitutes for tailoring a course specifically to meet the needs of the organization and the employees. For those times when we can indeed tailor short courses, we're usually pleased with the results of our efforts. Yet we sometimes find ourselves unable to tailor a course as much as we'd like, and it's good to have that basic organizational plan in reserve for such cases.

After sifting through more than 200 short course outlines, I compiled composite outlines for the following short courses:

1. Business Report Writing
2. Executive Communication
3. Proposal Writing
4. Technical Report Writing

I do not present these outlines as the ideal or the best ones possible. You may disagree with both the content and the sequence of points in these outlines, and you may well have presented successful courses radically different in structure. But most outlines fall somewhere within the boundaries of these presented. They represent the typical course offered to employees in business and industry. The outlines I surveyed were all in-house rather than consultant-based.

The typical course meets six times for two hours each session. It is not uncommon, of course, to find extreme variations, ranging from 2 to 36 hours. See "In-House Training in Written Communication: A Status Report" in this volume for detailed information about course characteristics.

You'll notice that the outlines do not reflect teaching strategies, course assignments, or audience characteristics. You might compare your own course structure with the appropriate outline and perhaps modify your approach. Above all, remember that we ought not to be shackled by the constraints of an outline. We ought instead to be masters of our own fate.

BUSINESS REPORT WRITING—6 TWO-HOUR SESSIONS

1. Purposes and Functions of Business Reports
 - A. Solving problems
 - B. Supplying information to decision-makers
 - C. Providing feedback to management
2. Characteristics of a Good Report
 - A. Accurate
 - B. Factual
 - C. Clear
 - D. Complete
 - E. Easy to read and comprehend
3. Primary Characteristics of a Short Report
 - A. Frequency
 - B. Length
 - C. Combination of functions and purposes
 - D. Format of presentation
 - E. Tone, approach, etc.
4. Primary Characteristics of a Long Formal Report
 - A. Frequency
 - B. Length
 - C. Combination of functions and purposes
 - D. Format of presentation
 - E. Tone, approach, etc.
5. Researching the Business Report
 - A. Preparing the proposal
 - B. Gathering the data
 - C. Analyzing and interpreting the data
 - D. Reaching conclusions
 - E. Making recommendations
6. Preparing the Business Report
 - A. Determining the format
 - B. Writing the report
 - C. Evaluating and rewriting

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATION—10 TWO-HOUR SESSIONS

1. Importance of Communication in Management and the Organization
2. Theoretical Considerations/Human Relations
3. Audience Analysis—Targeting Your Communication
4. Structuring Your Communication
 - A. Developing strategy
 - B. Organizing criteria, grouping evidence
 - C. Storyboard techniques
5. Communicating With Public Media
 - A. Journalism
 - B. Radio/Television
6. Communicating With Employees
 - A. Downward, upward, lateral communication
 - B. The grapevine
7. Communicating With Potential Employees
 - A. Attracting applicants
 - B. Conducting interviews
 - C. Evaluating applicants
8. Communicating With Clients and Customers
9. Communicating With Governmental Agencies
10. Communicating With Community Organizations

PROPOSAL WRITING—5 TWO-HOUR SESSIONS

1. Overview of Proposal Process
 - A. Current proposal "state of the art"
 - B. Role of marketing
 - C. Managerial considerations
 - D. Advantages/disadvantages of limited resources
 - E. Submitting "realistic" proposals after establishing bid criteria
2. Designing the Proposal (two sessions)
 - A. Role of engineer in writing and selling the technical proposal
 - B. Market intelligence and derivation of capture strategy

- C. Information transfer process (designing proposal for its communication environment)
- D. Evaluation process (readying the proposal for the evaluation)
- E. Derivation and composition of topics
 - 1. Fundamentals of topic methodology
 - 2. Typical procedure for deriving topical outline
- F. How to write encounter worksheets
- G. Mechanics of proposals
 - 1. Rules of style
 - 2. Resumes
 - 3. Plans
- 3. Negotiating Proposal with Various Contributors
 - A. Guaranteeing consistency
 - B. Various approaches—outlines, instructions, storyboards, etc.
 - C. Combining boilerplate and targeted data
- 4. Writing the Proposal
 - A. Structuring a persuasive presentation
 - B. Anticipating objections
 - C. Appearing confident but not arrogant
 - D. Strategies for designing proposals when you can't meet all the customer's criteria and requirements
 - E. Writing and editing—polishing the presentation
 - F. Reviewing the document
- 5. Managing the Proposal Process
 - A. Managerial control
 - B. The proposal leader
 - C. The proposal team structure
 - D. Meeting scheduled deadlines
 - E. Quality and the corporate image

TECHNICAL REPORT WRITING—12 THREE-HOUR SESSIONS

- 1. Overview of effective writing style, emphasis on conciseness and readability.
- 2. Survey of common grammatical problems—parallelism, dangling and misplaced modifiers, pronoun problems, subject-verb agreement, etc.
- 3. Survey of grammatical problems (continued)—faulty comparisons, subjunctive, tense, passive and active, etc.
- 4. Diction as related to style; word choice.

5. Sentence structure related to style; sentence variations and means of achieving desired emphasis; pace.
6. Paragraph structure and use of various rhetorical patterns; coherence and unity.
7. Effective organizational techniques; logic and development.
8. Handling numbers, hyphens, abbreviations.
9. Punctuation, spelling problems, editing practices.
10. Effective letters; public relations factor, tone, organization.
11. Major reports—structure, design, emphasis.
12. Major reports—structure, design, emphasis.

Effective Writing Series for Management

William J. Buchholz, *Bentley College*

Purpose: To *learn* to write more *effectively*.

Effective writing is precise, clear, and well organized.

Effective writing conveys the desired information and attitude.

To make your writing more effective, you will need to concentrate on your control of words, sentences, paragraphs, organizational strategies, and devices of emphasis.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

Session One—To understand and improve my approach to

1. Communication and noncommunication.
2. Concise writing.
3. Active writing.
4. Concrete and abstract expression.

Session Two—To understand and improve my approach to

1. Defining reader and purpose.
2. Sentence structure.
3. Paragraph structure.
4. Elements of coherence.

Session Three—To understand and improve my approach to

1. Inductive and deductive structure.
2. Modes of emphasis.
3. Message design.
4. Information ordering.

Session Four—To understand and improve my approach to

1. Outlining as a logical device.
2. Executive summaries.
3. Message beginnings and endings.
4. Editing as a means of organization.

Session Five—To follow up and recap one month later.

Technical Writing Syllabus for Eleven-Week Session

William J. Buchholz, *Bentley College*

Week 1:

Introduction of basic theory and communication principles.

Assignment:

Introductory memo.

Bring in one page writing sample.

Week 2:

1. Discuss writing samples.
2. Technical and business jargon.
3. Abstract and general vs. concrete and specific.
4. Wordiness and unnecessary complication.

Assignment:

Do handout.

Bring in one page writing sample.

Week 3:

1. Discuss writing samples.
2. Discuss grammar and usage sheet.
3. Clauses and phrases (modification and emphasis).
4. Basic sentence structure and length.

Assignment:

Bring in one page writing sample.

Week 4:

1. Discuss writing samples.
2. Sentence types (emphasis and variety).
3. Punctuation (clarity and emphasis).

Assignment:

Bring in one page writing sample.

Week 5:

1. Discuss writing samples.
2. Paragraphs (length and white space).
 - 2.1 Topic identification.
 - 2.2 Internal logical development.
 - 2.3 Transition devices for coherence.

Assignment:

Bring in one page writing sample.

Week 6:

1. Discuss writing samples.
2. Technical definitions and descriptions.

Assignment:

Write an expanded definition. If possible, choose a term which must be clarified for one of your current projects.

Week 7:

1. Discuss writing samples.
2. Technical process.
3. Informational letters and memos.

Assignment:

Write an explanation of a technical process. If possible, choose something from an on-going project.

Week 8:

1. Discuss writing samples.
2. Informational letters and memos.
 - 2.1 You-attitude.
 - 2.2 Tone.
 - 2.3 Clarity and direction.

Assignment:

Bring in informational letter or memo.

Week 9:

1. Discuss writing sample.
2. Report organization (major components).
3. Abstracts.

Assignment:

Bring in abstract of a report you've done or are doing.

Week 10:

1. Discuss writing sample.
2. Outlines (tables of contents).
3. Headings and graphics.
4. Sectional structures.

Week 11:

Follow up session one month later: discuss writing progress and problems.

Consulting and In-House Writing Courses: A Selected Bibliography

L. W. Denton, IBM Corporation Austin, Texas

W. E. Rivers, Auburn University

In recent years, increasing demands for training in effective written communication have generated numerous publications on effective teaching methodology, on consulting practice, on course content and structure, and on various related topics. Twenty years ago, few such publications were available to us. This increased publishing activity, most of us would agree, is both a sign of, and a requirement for, a maturing discipline.

In this bibliography, we've attempted to select relevant articles that you might find useful in your own consulting work. The content of the papers and articles falls naturally into these three categories:

Consulting and Professional Training

Teaching Methodology and Short Courses (General)

Discussions of Successful Short Courses (Specific)

While the list of entries is by no means comprehensive (and we are responsible for the accuracy of the entries), the items annotated here are representative of the scope and complexity (or lack of it) found in the literature on consulting and in-house writing programs.

As our discipline matures, we shall see less attention given to nuts-and-bolts approaches and more given to research studies on audience perception, adult training methodologies, and teaching/response correlations. We'll perhaps see studies on ways to accurately test a student's progress in an in-house course on writing. Perhaps we'll better understand why most organizations try to determine neither student progress in writing courses nor the costs for offering such courses. And perhaps we'll learn whether students find in-house writing courses useful because of job-related benefits or because they know their superiors want them to respond favorably to this training effort.

For future reference, we must continue to monitor ABCA publications, and other publications related to our discipline, including these:

Training/HRD

Technical Communication

Proceedings of ABCA national and regional conferences

The Journal of Business Communication

The ABCA Bulletin

Proceedings of International Technical Communications Conferences—Society for Technical Communication

Training and Development Journal

Journal of Technical Writing and Communication

IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication

In addition to ABCA publications, you'll find the Society for Technical Communication *Proceedings of International Technical Communications Conferences* especially useful. For more than 20 years, papers in these published proceedings have addressed consulting and in-house courses in writing. Let us also recommend *Teaching Technical Writing and Editing—In-House Programs That Work*, James G. Shaw (ed.), Anthology No. 5, Society for Technical Communication, Washington, D.C., 1976.

After compiling these entries, we're optimistic about future developments in consulting and the teaching of in-house courses in writing. The publication of this particular collection on consulting is a milestone in itself; we shall see continuing efforts in research which will have a beneficial impact on all of us who do consulting.

CONSULTING AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Becker, Stephen P. "How to prove—and report—Return on (Training) Investment," *Training*, (May 1976), 39-40.

To justify training costs on the basis of return on investment, the consultant or trainer must determine specific measurements on a continuing basis. It is essential to measure performance before and after training and express that performance in "numbers with organizational meaning." Example: "35 percent of the clerks are able to process 18 to 22 percent more applications with a 50 percent less error rate as a direct result of the training program."

Becker, Stephen P. "Measure training results SDRAWKCAB," *Training*, (April 1977), 18, 23.

The keys to effective training measurement are these: Be specific, and measure in terms of dollar value to the organization. Rather than tallying courses and participants, devise research plans to produce usable information based on sampling techniques, evaluation surveys, and similar methods.

- Blicq, Ronald S. "Starting into Part-Time Consulting," *Proceedings*, 27th International Technical Communication Conference, 1980, pp. R-107-R-110.

After quickly reviewing the obvious advantages of part-time consulting for teachers of technical and business writing, Blicq discusses some factors that should be considered before starting, including advice on marketing services and developing a professional image.

- Broadwell, Martin W. "The True Cost of Training," *Training*, (October 1975), 22, 24, 49.

Calculating the actual costs of a training program is a complex process. It involves costs of training facilities, instruction (including costs for trainees being away from the job, as well as consultants' fees and expenses, etc.), design and development, and evaluation and followup.

- Buchholz, William J. "Interviewing and Auditing Procedures for In-House Communication Seminars," *The ABCA Bulletin*, (December 1979), 22-26.

In preparing a communications seminar, the consultant should rely heavily on interviews to determine the needs of the organization as executives perceive those needs. The consultant should use an audit questionnaire to provide specific information on the client's communication needs. A sample audit questionnaire is included.

- Buchholz, William J. "The First Consulting Job: Price, Proposal, and Marriage," *The ABCA Bulletin*, (December 1978), 1-6.

The author provides guidelines for securing a first consulting job—including pricing strategy, suggestions for constructing a good proposal, and comments on the professional resume and cover letter. A proposal for a technical writing seminar and the accompanying cover letter are presented as examples.

- Campbell, Mary Ellen. "Consulting and Readability: The Key to Motivating Clients," *The Journal of Business Communication*, (Fall 1981), 35-41.

Adults in communications training courses can be motivated to learn by pointing out to them better ways to approach their reading audiences. Reluctance can be overcome in other ways: by protecting the egos of these professionals, by using writing samples of class participants for group discussion, and by helping the participants gain confidence in their improved communicative abilities.

- Conway, William D. "The Writing Consultant—A User's Guide," *Proceedings*, 27th International Technical Communication Conference, 1980, pp. R-111-R-113.

The author looks at bringing in an outside consultant to teach writing

courses from the point of view of the corporation training officer. Conway reviews the advantages an out-of-house writing consultant can offer, presents guidelines on how to identify a good consultant, and makes suggestions on how the corporation training officer can help insure that the consultant will be successful.

Dieterich, Daniel. "English Teacher/Writing Consultant," *Business Communication Matters*, (October 1981), 1, 3-5.

As increasing numbers of college English teachers engage in consulting activities, they face opposition to those activities from their colleagues and from their administrators. The author responds to various opposing arguments. He concludes that consulting is beneficial to the faculty member, to the college or university, to the business employing the consultant, and to the college students in the classroom.

Dillon, Kristine E. and Karen L. Bane, "Consulting and Conflict of Interest: A Compendium of the Policies of Almost One Hundred Major Colleges and Universities," *Educational Record*, (Spring 1980), 52-72.

The authors present and analyze policies on consulting and conflicts of interest of 98 American universities. They conclude that although "most universities are attentive to potential problems created by consulting. . . , their attention is probably not as focused on issues of concern to those outside the university as the external critics believe is necessary." (p. 53)

Gilbert, Thomas F. "The High Cost of Knowledge," *Personnel*, (March-April 1976), 11-23.

Effective course design helps reduce the amount of training time necessary to accomplish the job and increase the focus of the course on techniques relevant to good job performance.

Hays, Robert. "Communications Consulting—Both Sides," *The ABCA Bulletin*, (December 1979), 18-21.

Successful selection of a communications consultant depends on: (1) analyzing the organization's need for a consultant, (2) deciding on the best way to meet the need, (3) selecting the consultant, (4) outlining expectations of both parties, (5) agreeing on fees, expenses, and method of payment. The contract must specify desired results and "the expectations of both parties."

Hildebrandt, Herbert W. "Business Communication Consulting and Research in Multinational Companies," *The Journal of Business Communication*, (Spring 1978), 19-26.

To serve as a communication consultant in Germany and in other countries, an American must know the native language, the cultural variables,

differences in the organization's control of information, variations in organizational procedure, differences in the social environment, and cultural differences in the perception of time.

- Jackson, Stephanie. "The case for hiring OUTSIDE CONSULTANTS," *Training/HRD*, (June 1980), 25-26.

Consultants can be used successfully by most organizations provided that care is exercised in selecting consultants. The contract must specify desired results and "the expectations of both parties."

- Lastra, Barry and Maurice B. Nichols. "Define and broadcast your training philosophy," *Training*, (November 1978), 16-17.

A recent reorganization at Chevron U.S.A., Inc. decentralized the training function. A training staff at headquarters provides guidance and philosophic direction for training programs in field offices. Training under such circumstances can be standardized through defining goals and training philosophy and communicating this information to involved parties.

- Marver, James D. and Carl Vernon Patton. "The Correlates of Consultation: American Academics in 'The Real World,'" *Higher Education*, (August 1976), 319-335.

The authors derive the characteristics of those academics who consult from a 1969 study sponsored by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education. They conclude that academics who also work as paid consultants tend to be active in a variety of areas. They usually publish more, teach more graduate than undergraduate students, are younger, and hold higher ranks than their colleagues.

- Newstrom, John W. "Selecting Training Methodologies," *Training and Development Journal*, (October 1975), 12-16.

The process of selecting the best training methodology should be based on an analysis of these variables: cost, training objectives, time, class size, and learning principles.

- Patton, Carl V. and James D. Marver. "Paid Consulting by American Academics," *Educational Record*, (Spring 1979), 175-184.

The authors analyze data from a 1975 survey of American academics conducted by the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education to determine a profile of those faculty members who are doing consulting work. Although the authors call for vigilance to prevent abuses, they conclude that paid consulting is generally beneficial for both the individuals involved and their schools and the "academics who engage in paid consulting tend to be more active in the academy than their colleagues who do not consult." (p. 175)

Priest, Daniel B. "Consultants' Fees," *The ABCA Bulletin*, (December 1974), 16.

The author provides a scale of consulting fees—minimum, maximum, and median—for partner or equivalent principal management consultant, senior management consultant, management consultant, and junior management consultant.

Putnam, Linda L. "Role Functions and Role Conflicts of Communication Trainers," *The Journal of Business Communication*, (Fall 1979), 37-52.

Survey responses from 60 trainers point to their concern for developing effective interpersonal relationships with their students. The trainers were concerned with linking training programs to job performance and company profitability. The survey provides information on communication topics preferred and ranked by the trainers, on teaching methods, and on evaluation processes used by the trainers.

Ricks, Don M. "Let the 'academics' train—after they've paid their dues!" *Training/HRD*, (September 1980), 114.

Academics who want to be trainers because of "dropping enrollments and shrinking budgets" must "pay their dues." They must learn about motivation, learning, and training—subjects they have not learned or taught in their teaching careers.

Salinger, Ruth D. "Why Training Fails," *Training*, (February 1975), 28-33.

A U.S. Civil Service Commission study analyzes the numerous problems that can inhibit or prevent learning from occurring and presents suggestions for effective training.

Sisk, Elise. "The Pro's of Turning In-House Prof and How to Offset the Con's," *Proceedings, 15th International Technical Communications Conference, 1968, E-14* (3 pages). Reprinted in *Teaching Technical Writing and Editing—In-House Programs That Work*, James G. Shaw (ed), Anthology No. 5, Society for Technical Communication, Washington, D.C., 1976, pp. 62-65.

The author points out the advantages (familiarity with personnel, access to documents, etc.) held by in-house writer-editors. To offset the major disadvantage of an in-house teacher (i.e., initial indifference from students), Sisk suggests ways to build prestige for the course.

Suessmuth, Patrick. "A rule of thumb way to determine quickly the real cost of any training program," *Training*, (October 1976), 43-44.

By calculating 10 percent of the yearly salary of all class participants, one can use the 10 percent rule to determine costs of a five-day training course. The author closely examines cost items such as benefits, replace-

ment and lost production costs, overhead, tuition, training department costs, and travel and living costs.

Tarr, Stephen. "Hire outside resources. They'll give you the biggest bang for your training buck," *Training*, (January 1980), 66.

The author presents a trainer's viewpoint on hiring outside consultants and also suggests guidelines for the "care and feeding" of consultants.

"Teaching the boss to write," *Business Week* (October 25, 1976), 56,58.

Because of "an erosion of writing skills" among senior executives, managers, and new business school graduates, many companies are spending thousands of dollars a year to send employees through courses on effective writing. Several successful experiences with writing consultants are described.

Tichy, Henrietta. "Teaching in Industry: The Consultant-Instructor Speaks," *Proceedings*, 19th International Technical Communication Conference, 1972, pp. 65-70. Reprinted in *Teaching Technical Writing and Editing—In-House Programs That Work*, James G. Shaw (ed.), Anthology No. 5, Society for Technical Communications, Washington, D.C., 1976, pp. 5-11.

Key problems in many companies desiring to offer writing courses to their employees involve the selection of an instructor, the choice of a text, the framework of the course, and the attitudes management has toward the course and toward the instructor. Strong cooperation between management and the writing consultant-teacher is essential to the success of any writing program.

Timm, Paul R. and Elliott A. Pood. "Communication Consulting and Training: A Look Before We Leap?" *Proceedings*, 44th National and 5th International Convention, American Business Communication Association, 1979, pp. 201-209.

Responses to a questionnaire help construct "a 'state-of-the-art'" picture of organizational communication consulting. The authors present demographic data about the 91 consultants responding to the survey. They also address the respondents' philosophy of consulting/training, ways in which they gather data from organizations, and techniques they use to diagnose communication problems.

Wasylik, James E., Lyle Sussman, and Robert P. Leri. "Communication Training as Perceived by Training Personnel," *Communication Quarterly*, (Winter 1976), 32-38.

The authors describe a study designed to determine the nature and extent of in-house communication training and to solicit from those who conduct training courses their views on the relative importance of various commu-

nication skills and the barriers in implementing communication training. The respondents in this study thought that listening and writing were the most important communication skills; public speaking and nonverbal skills they viewed as relatively unimportant. The major problem they say they face in their work is upper management's lack of recognition or lack of action to correct communication problems.

Wydra, Frank T. "The case *against* hiring OUTSIDE CONSULTANTS," *Training/HRD*, (June 1980), 24-25.

An organization should avoid using outside consultants unless absolutely necessary. Consultants are expensive, and the organization may become dependent on them, rather than solving its own problems.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY AND SHORT COURSES (GENERAL)

Beamer, Lane F. "A Fresh Approach to the Professional Development of Technical Communication," *Proceedings*, 22nd International Technical Communication Conference, 1975, pp. 145-147.

The author suggests that companies go beyond in-house workshops on basic writing techniques to provide programs that focus on new methods in technical communication including programmed-instruction course writing, computer-assisted-instruction course writing, graphics, typography, etc.

Bergen, Martin J. "Formal Training Programs," *Proceedings*, Association of Technical Writers and Editors, and Society of Technical Editors, 1956, pp. 20-24.

The author describes a proposed Associate of Applied Science Degree in Publication Technology designed to provide the would-be technical writer with an appropriate educational background—skills needed in languages (English, engineering and science) in mathematics, in graphics, and in behavior.

Biedenbach, Joseph M. "Continuing Engineering Education by Video Tape," *Journal of Technical Writing & Communication*, (Summer 1973), 223-235.

The author describes an industrial training program which uses video-taped sessions, supplemented by textbooks, study guides, and an associate instructor at each location to provide instruction of a consistent quality to a large number of engineers working in many different locations on different schedules. Biedenbach suggests that this approach would be successful for many in-house training programs as well as continuing education courses provided by universities.

- Bowman, Joel P. and Bernadine P. Branchaw. "Communication Training Programs for Business," *The ABCA Bulletin*, (December 1978), 12-15.

Training programs developed for presentation at the 40th Annual and First International Convention of the American Business Communication Association were modified to make them "more relevant for business." For each topic, a training schedule, a word track, and a handout package were developed.

- Broadwell, Martin A. "How to Deal With a Mixture of Age and Experience in the Classroom," *Training*, (July 1976), 32-33.

When employees with vastly different age and experience levels are in the same class, the instructor must strive to protect everyone's ego and to encourage participation and feedback.

- Brookes, B. C. "Technical Writing in Industry: Technique and Morale," *IRE Transactions on Engineering Writing and Speech*, (August 1962), 15-20.

On the basis of teaching numerous in-plant courses, the author comments on several factors which can affect the quality of written reports and presents four case studies as examples of problems in effective communication.

- Cushing, David. "Reading, writing, and listening courses," *Training/HRD*, (February 1981), 52, 54.

The author provides guidelines for selecting courses in speed reading, writing improvement, and effective listening. Much depends on course objectives, audience needs, and available resources. Experienced training managers comment on each type of course.

- David, Carol. "Teaching Business Communication to Adults," *The ABCA Bulletin*, (June 1979), pp. 11-14.

While this article deals with a university extension course, rather than a consulting assignment, its analysis of an adult audience is helpful. Self-directed learning is a key concept in working with adults, and the instructor must consider their wide variety of experiences, their perceptions of their own lives at this point, and the urgency with which most adults seek skills which they can apply immediately.

- Denton, L. W. "In-House Training in Written Communication: A Status Report," *The Journal of Business Communication*, (Spring 1979), 3-14.

Results of an analysis of 268 writing courses offered by 123 organizations are presented. A typical course profile is constructed and types of courses, teaching methodologies, methods for determining costs, etc. are described.

Dorsey, Barbara G. and Joan P. Wackerman. "An Engineering Approach to In-House Technical Writing Courses," *Proceedings*, 27th International Technical Communication Conference, 1980, pp. R-13-R-18.

The author describes an in-house writing course designed using an engineering approach to learning called Instructional Systems Development (ISD). The article discusses in detail the six steps involved in the approach to demonstrate how it can help generate a course that not only meets both the employees' and company's requirements but also teaches skills which are retained over a long period.

Ferguson, Richard and Earl McDowell. "Writing Apprehension Among Writers in Industry: Some Implications for In-House Training," *Proceedings*, 27th International Technical Communication Conference, 1980, pp. R-101-R104.

The paper demonstrates that many people enrolled in in-house training programs on writing do have basic apprehensions about writing that have negative influences on their writing. After describing a study conducted to reveal the presence or absence of these doubts and fears, the authors suggest some ways to help the apprehensive writer.

Gabbert, William L. "The Third Approach," *Proceedings*, 15th International Technical Communication Conference, 1968, E-16 (3 pages).

The author compares teaching technical writing in a traditional university setting to tutoring individual engineers on the job. He then describes his method of quickly teaching better writing to working technical writers by means of a series of rules of thumb (his "Third Approach").

Goddard, M. Lee. "A Checklist for Planning and Presenting a Letter and Report Writing Seminar for Industry," *The ABCA Bulletin*, (December 1978), 22-23.

The author presents a detailed checklist for these topics: (1) developing contacts, (2) selling the seminar program, (3) developing the program content, (4) presenting the program, and (5) evaluating the program.

Hall, Allen. "Business Communication in Prison," *The ABCA Bulletin*, (December 1978), pp. 11-12.

While this article deals with teaching writing in prison, rather than a consulting assignment, its analysis of an adult audience is helpful. The author discusses the advantages, the disadvantages, and the rewards of teaching in such an environment.

Hays, Robert. "Case Problems Improve Technical Writing Courses and Seminars," *Journal of Technical Writing & Communication* (1976), 293-298.

Credible, sensible case problems can add realism to both academic and

industrial technical writing courses. Case problems reflect the systems approach to a technical writing task—a technique especially appealing to engineers.

- Johnson, Lawrence J. "Courses in Writing Beyond the University: A Caveat," *Journal of Technical Writing & Communication*, (1977), 105-120.

Many seminars and in-house programs in writing are unsuccessful because they are modeled after standard academic composition courses which also are unsuccessful. The academic and practical worlds have a joint responsibility to strengthen composition courses through resurrecting successful practices used during the Renaissance: "The rejection of formalism as an end in itself; the schools' emphasis on writing exercises applicable in the world outside of the classroom; and... demand for an appreciation of good writing."

- Lierman, Frederick, "Working with Non-Writers Who Are Now Writing," *Proceedings*, 27th International Technical Communication Conference, 1980, pp. R-93—R-96.

After summarizing the problems that arise when a "nonwriter" (usually an expert in some technical field who has important information to convey) is asked to write, Lierman offers some suggestions about the direction, information, and assistance "nonwriters" should be given as they work on individual projects.

- Lippert, John Wood. "Spreading a New Training Technique," *The ABCA Bulletin*, (December 1978), 23-27.

An experienced consultant, the author details methods he used to devise computer-assisted instruction, videotapes, a textbook, and audio stop-tape programs for teaching effective business communication. He explains the steps the trainee goes through to use these various media. An evaluation of this training procedure proves its effectiveness.

- Locker, Kitty O. "What Writers in Industry Know—and Need to Know—About Writing," *Proceedings*, 27th International Technical Communication Conference, 1980, pp. R-97—R-100.

The author concludes, after an analysis of over 2,000 varied pieces of business writing produced by writers on all levels, that nonprofessional writers will be most helped by a thorough review of composition basics. The article summarizes the results of this study, considers the cost of the poor writing revealed, and recommends "back to basics" short courses to solve the problems.

- Losano, Wayne A. "A Management-Run Orientation Program for Manual Writers," *Journal of Technical Writing & Communication*, (1976), 231-237.

While manual writing is a very specialized area of technical communication,

it seldom receives attention in standard college or in-plant courses. Managers planning an in-house manual writing program must know their organization's needs, the users of the firm's manuals, and the writers who will participate in the course. A useful 12-hour program might consist of six 2-hour sessions on manual organization, graphics, special problems, style and mechanics, and a miscellaneous section on items such as "notes, cautions, and warnings."

Losano, Wayne A. and Jan C. Robbins. "A Communications Package For Industry," *Proceedings*, 21st International Technical Communication Conference, 1974, pp. 131-134.

The authors argue that single short courses in report writing are often only minimally successful and advocate the use of a series of "mini-courses" designed to deal with a wider range of writing problems and geared to meet the specific needs of the scientists and engineers involved. Suggestions for such a series of "mini-courses" are presented.

Mazzatenta, Ernest. "In-House Writing Courses: Aids or Anachronisms?" *Proceedings*, 20th International Technical Communication Conference, 1973, pp. 185-187. Reprinted in *Teaching Technical Writing and Editing—In-House Programs That Work*, James G. Shaw (ed.), Anthology No. 5, Society for Technical Communication, Washington, D.C., 1976, pp 1-4.

When considering offering employees writing courses, management should weigh the costs, advantages, and disadvantages of in-house courses and college or university evening classes. College classes are less expensive and time-consuming than in-house programs, but in-house programs offer greater flexibility, more opportunity for interaction with the instructor, greater opportunity to write on subjects with which students are familiar, easier access to advice and guidance from the instructor, and better opportunities for management to monitor the employees' progress.

O'Hara, F. M., Jr. "Conducting Technical-Writing Workshops," *Proceedings*, 27th International Technical Communication Conference, 1980, pp. R-115—R-117.

The author argues that workshops in which participants submit samples of their current writing for criticism are very effective and in some ways are more successful than traditional in-house courses in technical writing. O'Hara describes the major points of planning and implementation that should be followed to insure an effective workshop.

Rathbone, Robert R. "The Main Ingredients for a Successful In-Plant Writing Course," *Journal of Technical Writing & Communication*, 1974, 323-330.

In considering setting up an in-plant writing course, one should evaluate basic items of structure such as: frequency of meetings, length of class,

number of meetings, size and mix of class, instructor, etc. (Suggestions for a course syllabus are presented.)

- Rauch, Howard F. "Teaching Technical Writers How to Write: A Case History," *Proceedings*, 27th International Technical Communication Conference, 1980, pp. R-5-R-8.

Rauch outlines a method used to develop an in-house program in technical writing, and offers some suggestions on things to do and things not to do to insure an effective program. He presents a bibliography of publications helpful to those planning writing programs.

- Ricks, Don M. "The First 20 Minutes (Of Training)," *Training*, (August 1977), 58-59.

At the outset of a course, the trainer should create a harmonious relationship with the class and help students formulate their own learning objectives. This approach works much better than the traditional introductory lecture.

- Rossi, Reynold P. "Formal Training Programs," *Proceedings*, Association of Technical Writers and Editors, and Society of Technical Editors, 1956, pp. 25-27.

The author addresses the issue of whether technical writing is indeed a separate profession and provides information on how Fordham University is attempting to assess the educational needs of the technical writer.

- Shaw, James G. "A Checklist for Writers: A New Approach to Teaching Effective Writing in Industry," *Proceedings*, 14th International Technical Communication Conference, 1967, Paper 140, 11 pp. Reprinted in *Teaching Technical Writing and Editing—In-House Programs That Work*, James G. Shaw (ed.), Anthology No. 5, Society for Technical Communication, Washington, D.C., 1976, pp. 21-27.

An unusual approach for teaching writing involves the use of the Detractor Scale—a list of negative reactions from students discussing faults in written material they review. The Detractors (so named because they detract from the effect of good writing) include: poor organization, insufficient detail, improperly used words, overly long sentences, verbosity, excessive referencing, vagueness, difficult style, overuse of passive voice, and poorly prepared tables and illustrations.

- Simons, John L. "The Technical Aspect of the Technical Editor's Job," *Proceedings*, 24th International Technical Communication Conference, 1977, pp. 268-270.

The author discusses the editor as teacher of the engineers and scientists he or she works with—through the preparation of a writing manual, the

presentation of in-house writing programs, and one-on-one counseling sessions.

- Smith, Terry C. "How to Make an In-Plant Writing Course Enjoyable," *Technical Communication*, (Third Quarter 1971), pp. 12-14. Reprinted in *Teaching Technical Writing and Editing—In-House Programs That Work*, James G. Shaw (ed.), Anthology No. 5, Society for Technical Communication, Washington, D.C., 1976, pp. 66-70.

Learning can be promoted more effectively if in-house courses make use of interesting, lively, sometimes humorous problems rather than the standard textbook variety. While the assignments may entertain the students and encourage them to learn, they must also be assignments that the instructor can grade easily and quickly since he or she may be working a 40-hour week in addition to teaching the writing course.

- Souther, James A. "Cooperation Between Industry and the Universities in the Training of Technical Writers," *Proceedings*, Society of Technical Writers and Editors, 1957, pp. 61-63.

The author calls for cooperation between college/industry and commitment from industry. He calls for emphasis on writer's knowledge of subject areas as opposed to simply a "degree" in engineering—we should judge by abilities, not by pure academic background.

- Tierney, Cliff, Thomas J. Miranda, and Robert E. Wilson, "Written Technical Communication Involves More Than Writing," *Proceedings*, 24th International Technical Communication Conference, 1977, pp. 278-280.

The authors describe a workshop at Whirlpool Corporation which not only makes participants aware of good writing techniques, but also addresses other important factors—the role of managerial climate, "how job function affects choice of information source, and how organizational structure generally expedites the flow of management information but often impedes the transfer of technical information."

- Van Hagan, Charles. "The Long and Short of Technical Writing Courses," *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Writing and Speech*, (December 1971), 68-75.

Scientists and engineers can take technical writing courses lasting from one-day (in-house) up to one year (college). The one-day lecture reaches a large number of people at once but is limited in coverage. The eight-week short course allows some writing practice and also keeps students' enthusiasm high. The three-day cram course builds enthusiasm but prevents extensive writing practice. The one- or two-semester college course may be a waste of time for the engineer—especially if young, inexperienced college students are also in the class. Careful attention must be given

to selecting the proper type of course—one which will motivate the participants long after the course is completed.

- Walter, John. "In-Plant Training in Technical Communications," *Proceedings*, Society of Technical Writers and Publishers, 1961, pp. 36-39.

A survey of 300 industrial firms revealed that 45 percent conduct in-plant training in written communication. The survey gathered information on instructors, common faults in writing, company guides to reports, standards, manuals, etc. The author presents a detailed analysis of in-plant course presented to Apparatus Division of Texas Instruments, Inc., as well as information on specially prepared instruction materials—10 one-hour sessions.

- Wiegand, Richard E. "Writer Training—Where Do We Go From Here?" *Proceedings*, 22nd International Technical Communication Conference, 1975, pp. 140-144.

The author points out that most new technical writers do not meet minimal standards for the writing tasks they are expected to do. Therefore, he concludes, company training programs must be designed to alleviate these specific writing problems. He describes such a course and suggests that the Society for Technical Communication propose a standard curriculum for technical communicators in order to provide a "more objective base for job selection."

DISCUSSIONS OF SUCCESSFUL SHORT COURSES (SPECIFIC)

- Bowman, Martha D. and Jane C. Phelan, "Communicating with Mortals," *Proceedings*, 27th International Technical Communication Conference, 1980, pp. R-9—R-11.

The authors present a program to improve writing skills among those engineers working for the Travelers Insurance Company who must communicate in writing with the general public. The article includes an outline of the entire course and descriptions of the attention-getting (humorous) methods the authors have employed to make dull grammatical and stylistic points memorable.

- Cohen, Gerald I. "A New Way to Better Writing (An In-Plant Training Course)," *Proceedings*, 21st International Technical Communication Conference, 1974, pp. 135-136.

Cohen briefly describes a course limited to "curing . . . the three worst and most common diseases in contemporary technical writing: (1) The overuse of vague and abstract words; (2) The overuse of strings of noun-modifiers; and (3) The overuse of unsupported generalities."

Cummings, Ralph. "Industrial Training of Technical Writers," *Proceedings*, 7th Annual National Convention, Society of Technical Writers and Editors, and Technical Publishing Society, 1960, pp. 189-196.

Cummings describes a 6-month training program at Chrysler Corporation Missile Division—17 weeks classroom training in which trainees write simple manuals according to military specifications and 9 weeks closely supervised on-the-job training. The program involves writing, editing, interpretation of specifications, use of technical information services, illustrating and publishing techniques.

Dandridge, Edmund, Jr. "North Carolina State University's Five-Day Seminar in Business and Industrial Communications," *Proceedings*, 14th International Technical Communication Conference, 1967, Paper 72, (2 pp).

Dandridge describes a 5-day intensive non-credit workshop, its mechanics, subject area, class makeup.

Denton, Lynn W. "Continuing Engineering Education in Technical Communication," *Engineering Education*, (October 1972), 65-66.

The author describes an annual technical writing institute offered by Texas Tech University in Lubbock. Not designed to show a profit, the Institute's programs have attracted excellent speakers and registrants from several states and organizations. Logistics for organizing and financing the programs are described.

Fife, Jim, "An In-House Writing Course That Works," *Proceedings*, 15th International Technical Communication Conference, 1968, E-13 (4 pages).

The author argues that because of economic pressures the number of in-house writing courses will increase. To be successful, according to Fife, such courses should focus on principles fundamental to all writing. He then outlines and discusses an in-house course successfully taught for a number of years at Sandia Corporation.

Gould, Jay R. "Technical Writers' Institute," *Proceedings*, 14th International Technical Communication Conference, 1967, Paper 73, (2 pp).

The author describes the annual RPI Technical Writers' Institute, procedures, instructors, subject area, etc., conducted in Troy, New York.

Gray, Dwight E. "The Technical Report Writing Workshop of the Pennsylvania State University," *Proceedings*, Society of Technical Writers and Publishers, 1957, pp. 134-136.

The author describes an annual two-week workshop in report writing designed for practicing engineers, scientists, writers, and editors who need refresher courses in effective writing.

Hohnamm, Robert E. "A Two Hour Course in Report Writing," *Proceedings*,

22nd International Technical Communication Conference, 1975, pp. 160-164.

The author describes the content of and rationale for a short course in report writing based on research engineers' notebooks and the short R&D reports that must be written based upon them.

Jenson, Paul E. T. "An In-Plant Proposal-Writing Workshop," *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Writing and Speech*, (December 1966), pp. 46-50.

The author describes a 10-session writing workshop designed to give engineers an understanding of proposal writing; all writing is done in class to give the students practice in writing under a time limit.

Kirkman, John. "Short Courses on Effective Communication," *Journal of Technical Writing & Communication*, (Winter 1974), 23-52.

Short courses on effective communication are presented to industrial firms in Great Britain and Europe by The University of Wales Institute of Science and Technology in Cardiff. The courses, typically lasting five days and involving 35-40 hours of programmed activity, concentrate on practical applications of communication principles for the participants' daily work tasks. A very detailed course outline is presented.

Linville, Carver C. (Bill). "Developing an In-House Writing Course for Engineers and Scientists," *Proceedings*, 16th International Technical Communication Conference, 1969, pp. B-152-B-161. Reprinted in *Teaching Technical Writing and Editing—In-House Programs That Work*, James G. Shaw (ed.), Anthology No. 5, Society for Technical Communication, Washington, D.C., 1976, pp. 12-20.

The author describes a successful technical writing course consisting of sixteen 1½-hour sessions offered to professional employees of the Energy Research Center in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. The mechanics of organizing and presenting the course are discussed, and a detailed course outline is presented.

Mazzatenta, Ernest. "GM Research Improves Chemistry Between Science Writers, Editors," *Proceedings*, 22nd International Technical Communication Conference, 1975, pp. 153-157.

The author describes an editors' workshop set up to help science writers and editors at GM work together more amicably and effectively. The course not only deals with the personal dynamics of the writer-editor relationship, but also suggests a systematic approach to editing.

McKee, Blaine K. "Tenth Annual Institute in Technical and Industrial Communications," *Proceedings*, 14th International Technical Communication Conference, 1967, Paper 74, (1 p).

The author describes the annual writing institute held at Colorado State University, including mechanics, registration procedures, costs, speakers, etc.

Meyer, Charles A. "Seminar on Writing-Improvement Programs for Engineers—A Report," *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Writing and Speech*, (December 1964), pp. 18-22.

The author includes information on several in-plant courses, including one- or two-week writing institutes, university extension courses, one- or two-day lecture programs, and in-plant tutoring by technical editors.

Mitchell, John H. "Nantucket Workshop in Technical Writing," *Proceedings*, 14th International Technical Communication Conference, 1967, Paper 75, (2 pp).

The author describes the Nantucket Workshop, including subject area, faculty, and procedures. The class is limited to 16 members who meet for 3 weeks—a total of 45 classroom hours.

Parman, Lee R. and William F. Carstens. "A Practical Short Course in Technical Writing for Industry," *Proceedings*, Society of Technical Writers and Editors, 1957, pp. 70-74.

The authors discuss the philosophy behind the creation of a course in report writing for engineers and scientists at Sandia Corporation, Albuquerque, New Mexico. They provide detailed comments on class organization and individual sessions, and they present course outlines.

Rathbone, Robert R. "Communicating Technical Information (MIT) and Short Courses in Technical Writing and English (UCLA)," *Proceedings*, 14th International Technical Communication Conference, 1967, Paper 76, (2 pp).

The author describes the annual MIT program "Communicating Technical Information" and its subject areas, topics, enrollment procedures, costs, and staff. He also describes UCLA's 5-day short course in Technical Writing and English and its subject areas, registration data, etc.

Sawyer, Thomas M., Jr. "Summer Conference on Written Communications," *Proceedings*, 14th International Technical Communication Conference, 1967, Paper 77, (2 pp).

The author describes the course objectives, faculty, procedures, etc., of a summer conference offered at the University of Michigan.

Sayer, James Edward. "A Course in Effective Written Communication for Government Employees," *The ABCA Bulletin*, (September 1977), p. 18.

The author describes the course purpose, objectives, structure, and materials used in a course designed for government employees at the local, state,

and federal levels. The course involves eight 2-hour sessions (once a week) and seven major writing exercises—outlining, basic writing skills, clarity, visual representations, producing report, letters of transmittal, and assessing finished product.

- Souther, James W. "A Course for Writers and Supervisors," *Proceedings*, 15th International Technical Communication Conference, 1968, E-15 (5 pp).

The author argues that supervisors are as responsible for poor writing as are writers. He outlines a course designed to help people from both groups work together to better understand the special problems inherent in their situations and to begin a dialogue that will lead to better writing.

- Steeh, Judith A. "An In-House Course in Manuscript Preparation for Secretaries," *Proceedings*, 24th International Technical Communication Conference, 1977, pp. 120-121.

The author describes a course in manuscript preparation presented at the Environmental Research Institute of Michigan. Such a course improves the quality of manuscripts and lightens the burden of technical writers/editors as everyone works together to produce a better product.

- Tierney, Cliff, Thomas J. Miranda, and Robert E. Wilson. "Written Technical Communication Involves More Than Writing," *Proceedings*, 24th International Technical Communication Conference, 1977, pp. 278-280.

The authors describe a workshop at Whirlpool Corporation which not only makes participants aware of good writing techniques, but also addresses other important factors—the role of managerial climate, "how job function affects choice of information source, and how organizational structure generally expedites the flow of management information but often impedes the transfer of technical information."

- Weber, Max. "A Complete In-House Program in Technical Communication," *Proceedings*, 22nd International Technical Communication Conference, 1975, pp. 148-152.

The author describes a "complete" program in technical writing and speaking designed for scientists and engineers at Argonne National Laboratory. The program includes courses in technical report writing, effective speaking, and advanced technical writing.

- Weber, Max. "An Advanced In-House Course in Technical Writing," *Proceedings*, 20th International Technical Communication Conference, 1973, pp. 189-194. Reprinted in *Teaching Technical Writing and Editing—In-House Programs That Work*, James G. Shaw (ed.), Anthology No. 5, Society for Technical Communication, Washington, D.C., 1976, pp. 41-51.

The author describes the Advanced Technical Writing course taught at the

Argonne National Laboratory to students with various academic and technical backgrounds. The course, described in detail, helps students work on reports they have written as part of their job duties.

Weber, Max. "Teaching an Effective Course in Technical Writing in Private Industry," *Proceedings*, 17th International Technical Communication Conference, 1970, Paper E8-1, (6 pp). Reprinted in *Teaching Technical Writing and Editing—In-House Programs That Work*, James G. Shaw (ed.), Anthology No. 5, Society for Technical Communication, Washington, D.C., 1976, pp. 28-36.

The author describes the course in technical report writing offered to employees of Argonne National Laboratory. The course involves discussions of the writing process, diction, punctuation, style, and various writing problems encountered by the technical writer. Extensive use is made of reports written by various students on the job.

"Writing Training Solves Bureaucratic Problems," *Training/HRD*, (January 1979), 60, 63.

The Texas State Department of Public Welfare has greatly improved the writing of its employees through a "Write Right" program designed to eliminate bureaucratic jargon. The "Write Right" booklets written by Bill Wagner and Anne Robinson are now used in more than 30 states and appear on "several college reading lists."

About the Contributors

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Stephen Moskey is currently an Administrator in the Educational Consulting Services Department of the Aetna Institute for Corporate Education. He received his Ph.D. in Linguistics from Georgetown and has authored articles on linguistics, language teaching, and business communication. He has published two books, *Semantic Structures and Relations in Dutch: An Introduction to Case Grammar* and *The Aetna Manual of Style* (co-authored with Mark O'Brien), and was co-editor of *Business Communication: Academic and Professional Perspectives* (with June Ferrill). He has taught college English and Dutch and is currently Curriculum Consultant to the Saint Joseph College Program in English as a Second Language for Adults.

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